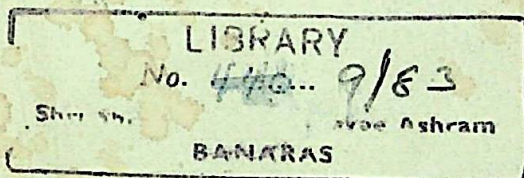


RAMDAS SPEAKS

VOLUME IX



JAPAN, HONGKONG, SINGAPORE,
MALAYA & CEYLON

1957

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Published by
The Manager, Anandashram,
P. O. Anandashram,
Via Kanhangad, S. Rly.

Price:- Re. 1—0—0

Printed by
K. Gokuldas Shenoy,
Srinivas Printing Works,
Kasaragod.

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JAPAN Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee Ashram
BANARAS

AT THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKYO.

15th November, 1954.

Meeting with Professor D. T. Suzuki,

ZEN BUDDHISM

Ramdas: Would you kindly tell us what Zen Buddhism stands for?

Suzuki: Zen was developed in China, but according to Buddhist tradition the teaching or practice of Zen is based on the historical fact that Buddha obtained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree through the practice of Zen some 2500 years ago. How we obtain that enlightenment is what Zen stands for.

Ramdas: Had Zen existed before Buddha?

Suzuki: Zen existed even before Buddha came and will exist even after the world comes to an end. Buddha was an instrument to tell us what Zen is.

Ramdas: What does it stand for?

Suzuki: It stands for enlightenment.

ZEN DISCIPLINE

Ramdas: What are the means of attaining that state?

Suzuki: By practising meditation and also certain fundamental problems of religion. The aspirants meditate on these problems, like the problem of life and the problem of death. They sit for meditation cross-legged in the Indian style. This comes from India, from Buddha's teaching; but what Zen Buddhism added to it is the Chinese way of not going away from life on earth, that is, practical life. So Zen does not despise work. The aspirants do even manual work just as farming, etc. We believe in fasting, and the Zen teachings also emphasise on limiting our wants to the minimum and doing good to others not only in the negative way but in the positive way also.

Ramdas: Do they take meat, wine, and fish?

Suzuki: No, not even fish; but there are some sects in Buddhism who allow people to eat meat. But the Zen Buddhism

does not permit it. Another thing is, when one advances on the path, he feels an aversion for meat-eating.

Ramdas: What about marriage among Zen Buddhists?

Suzuki: No. Monks are not allowed to get married. If they marry they are not monks. If you wish to visit a Zen monastery you may go to a place called Yokohama, and near it in Tsurumi there is a big Zen monastery. Perhaps you have not visited any such temple in Tokio. If you go to that monastery you will know what a Japanese Zen monastery looks like. Bodhi Dharma is the founder of Zen Buddhism.

Ramdas: Do you give initiation?

Suzuki: No, I am just a layman.

Ramdas: How is it that we were told that Mrs. B. W. came to you to get initiation?

Suzuki: Perhaps she is in some monastery. Japanese Buddhism is very different from the Chinese, Sinhalese or Indian Buddhism.

Ramdas: Buddha was against meat-eating. But in certain sects in Buddhism, people, it seems, are allowed to eat meat.

Suzuki: Certain sects do not object to meat-eating.

HOW BUDDHA DIED.

Ramdas: Buddha, of course, has permitted meat-eating in some exceptional cases like reasons of health, etc. It appears, before Buddha passed away, he had taken pork soup and, as a result of that, he got stomach trouble and passed away; but at the same time Ramdas heard from a friend who had read the Pali text, that it was mushroom soup and not pork. He was given a poisonous type of mushroom. Is there any truth in these statements?

Suzuki: That is the story. The Japanese interpretation is that it was mushroom and not pork. When the Japanese heard the former statement from the Sinhalese and the Chinese, they were surprised.

TEA CEREMONY

Ramdas: What is the significance of the tea ceremony?

Suzuki: Tea ceremony is a Japanese custom of synchronistic movement expressing itself in tea ceremony. This synchronisation consists of putting together Shintoism, Buddhism, Confucianism,

and Taoism. Shintoism that comes from Japan stands for harmony. Confucianism that came from China stands for reverence, Taoism for purity, and Buddhism for tranquility. All these four principles are to be expressed during the tea ceremony. Harmony means no discord among the visitors. They will all be in a most intimate spirit of friendship. When people are too intimate, mutual reverence is often neglected. Therefore reverence for each individual is emphasised here. As for purity, everything must be kept clean, not only in the physical aspect but in the mind also. Regarding tranquility, everything must be done very quietly and without any hurry.

TOKYO,

16th November, 1954.

At Seicho-No-Ie.

With Dr. Masaharu Taniguchi

PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL GO TOGETHER

M. Taniguchi: Is there a possibility of harmony between Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity?

Ramdas: In some religions you will find two aspects of God, personal and impersonal, but in some religions only one aspect. Buddha speaks of the impersonal and not the personal. Christianity speaks of the impersonal and the personal. The impersonal of the Christian and the impersonal of Buddha are one and the same. In Hinduism also we have the impersonal and the personal — Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman. This impersonal is also the same as Buddha's impersonal. Buddha said that our heart must be filled with love, compassion and peace. This is personal. Buddha's form is personal. He is the personal expression of the Bodhi Sattwa. So also the impersonal of the Hindus is manifest as Krishna and Rama. Through the personal we have to reach the impersonal. Although Buddha does not preach of the personal, he is the personal form of that Nirvana or Bodhi Sattwa. Buddha is worshipped as a personal teacher or a great Master. He said that we should not worship the personal, but he himself is now worshipped. So personal and impersonal go together. When you realise that there is one Truth or one Reality, you become the expression of that Reality.

SADHANA IN ANANDASHRAM

M. T: Do you have any special training?

Ramdas: Yes. Three things. Meditation, loving all beings, and serving all beings. Meditation with the head, love with the heart and service with the hands. For attaining concentration of mind, the method used is the constant repetition of God's name. It is called Japa.

M. T: What is the name of the God you chant?

Ramdas: We repeat "Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram". This Mantra was given to Ramdas by his Master, and Ramdas

was constantly repeating it. Mantra is an incantation or a formula just like Om-Mani-Padme-Hum. This contains the name of God, both personal and impersonal.

M. T: May I hear you chanting the Name?

Ramdas: Yes. He will chant for a few minutes. This used to create thrills, and the mind became still. After repeating this Mantra, say for 10 minutes, and sitting silent, there will be no thoughts arising in the mind and the mind becomes still. The body will be forgotten and you will get that peace which is universal. This is meditation. Meditation becomes easy by the repetition of this Mantra. In the Ashram in India, we all sing this Mantra together. We have various other activities also. We are serving the poor, the distressed and the ailing.

M. T: How do you carry on your organisation?

Ramdas: God helps. We have no money, but God sends money through friends. There are 30 or 40 persons staying permanently in the Ashram. We have thousands of devotees all over India and they are financing the Ashram and its activities.

What is Zen Buddhism? Ramdas does not know much about it. Ramdas met Prof. Suzuki yesterday, as he is the authority on Zen Buddhism.

MEANING OF ZEN

A friend: Buddhism that existed previous to Buddha was called a lesser vehicle. It was established after Dharma. Zen means union or Yoga. The present Buddhism offers a very difficult question and the aspirant is asked to meditate on the question. Zen means "union with the universe through meditation."

Ramdas: Through meditation you lose yourself and become one with the universe, extinguishing your individuality. The individual sense must go. The same thing is taught in Hinduism also. They do it through prayer, through repetition of God's name, through surrender and through discrimination. All these are to remove the ego-sense and realise that you are the all-pervading Truth. The desires must die. The mind must be absolutely pure, as pure as that of a child. We must see only one everywhere. No two. The differences must disappear. We must rise above all differences, sects, religions, country, caste, creed, and everything. We must have no likes or dislikes. We must love everybody seeing the one Truth everywhere.

M. T: That is the goal of religion?

Ramdas: Yes.

DO NOT RUN AFTER MIRACLES

M. T: What about the Yoga of walking on water?

Ramdas: That is no good. That is only a miracle. Ramdas will tell you a story about it. Two young men went to the forest to do penance for 12 years. They underwent strict penance, performed all the spiritual discipline necessary, during the 12 years. One of them wanted miraculous powers while the other wanted absolute liberation. After 12 years, when they returned from the forest, they had to cross a river near their village. The man with the miraculous powers walked on the water and easily crossed the river. The other man who had attained liberation, could not walk on the water, but he engaged a boat and crossed the river by paying, say, four yens. After both reached the other shore, the man with the miraculous powers told the other, "I could walk on the water, but you could not." To this the other replied, "You have done penance for 12 years only to get the power by which you could save 4 yens. Your attainment is therefore worth only 4 yens." It is no good trying to walk on water. Try to get Nirvana, liberation or Moksha or emancipation. This is what we should get, and not the power to walk on water.

M. T: We hear that in India there are many people who perform miracles.

Ramdas: Yes, there are some. But they are misled. We must love everybody, and should not run after miracles.

MEDITATION

M. T: How do you meditate?

Ramdas: Meditation is to realise the union of the soul with the Reality. You sit cross-legged and erect. Have your eyes' gaze on the centre of the eyebrows. Sit straight, but do not be stiff. Think of the Reality within you. He is the all-pervading, static, calm and silent Spirit. In this way you must bring into your mind His all-pervading nature and other attributes. But before doing this, it is better to repeat God's name for some time for control of the mind, so that you may get the needed stability and quietness. Generally, when you sit, your mind will be thinking of so many other things. So, give it the tactics of repeating

God's name. It will quieten down the mind. As it gets quietened, it will become still, and there will be no thought. Then you realise that you are the eternal and all-pervading Existence. You also feel you are one with the whole universe. You can sit like that in meditation for one or two hours, fully merged in the universal consciousness. This is what you call Samadhi.

M. T: What about breathing ?

WHEN BREATHING STOPS, MIND IS STILL

Ramdas: Automatically, breathing becomes slow and sometimes it will stop. When it stops the mind will be still. You should not force it. There is a process by which breathing exercises are done in India. But that is not really necessary. When you start meditation, breathing becomes very very slow and sometimes stops. In this way it will go on for a while, sometimes stopping, sometimes slowly breathing and again stopping till the mind becomes perfectly still. But Ramdas did one thing. For one or two years he was chanting only God's name. Afterwards he started meditation. By that time the mind had attained purity and as soon as he sat for meditation, without any struggle the mind became perfectly still. He sat silent and immediately lost the body idea. It was perfect meditation. Mind was not running here and there. In fact, there was no mind at all. There was only one universal consciousness.

WHY RAMDAS ENTERED RELIGION

M. T: When did you begin to get into religion ?

Ramdas: Thirty-three years ago, when Ramdas was 38 years old.

M. T: Why did you enter religion ?

Ramdas: God made him enter it. He drew him towards Him.

M. T: Have you any other real reason for entering into religion ?

Ramdas: No.

M. T: How did you know God called you ?

Ramdas: Ramdas felt it within. There is no other reason. If there are any external reasons in the eyes of others, they are not real.

M. T: What were you doing before that ?

Ramdas: He was engaged in some work in the world, mana-

ging a handloom cloth manufacturing concern. One day, an intense urge came from within and he felt it was God who gave the urge. He did not think it as having come from any other source. He met some saints. He was taught that contact of saints awakens God consciousness within the aspirant. After this urge came, Ramdas had no thought of the world. The world disappeared for him. The world had nothing to do with him. Day and night he was repeating God's name and he was mad, God-mad.

M. T: Did you come under any religious teacher?

Ramdas: Ramdas' father gave him the formula, "Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram", and said that by repeating this Mantra, Ramdas could attain realisation. Ramdas was only repeating that Mantra and had lost all interest in life. Then he started on a tour all over India with only one cloth on. He travelled in almost all places in India and God protected him. He went to caves and jungles and sat there for meditation. He has written two books about all his experiences. So now he is God's child.

M. T: What do you think of Japan?

Ramdas: We have not seen much of it. But we think Japan is a beautiful place. We are glad to have come here and met you all. If we had left out Japan, our tour would not have been complete. We are so happy that we came here. We had heard of Japan long long ago, and there is a closer link between India and Japan than between India and any other country. India produced Buddha, whose religion is so very popular here. So our link has been there from the time of Buddha.

RAMDAS WANTS TO BE REBORN

M. T: What about reincarnation?

Ramdas: Yes. There is reincarnation or rebirth for those who have not reached spiritual perfection. Those who have reached spiritual perfection are not born again. When desires are gone, one cannot be reborn.

M. T: Do you want to be reincarnated?

Ramdas: Yes, to tell everybody to think of God and love all. Ramdas has attained liberation and there is no need for him to come back again; but for serving humanity he would wish to come again.

TOKYO

16th November, 1954.

Speech at the Meeting at Seicho-No-Ie

WORLD RELIGION AND BROTHERHOOD

Dear friends,—Ramdas is very happy to find himself today in your midst to talk to you about his favourite subject, "World Religion and Brotherhood." You know there are several great religions in the world which aim at leading human beings towards the same goal, viz., the realisation of the universal Spirit which is at the basis of the universal manifestation, of which we are all so many individual parts. In the essential teachings of all the great teachers of the world, there is absolutely no difference. There is only one God who is the originator of us all, and we are His offspring—children or manifestation of that one supreme Reality. To recognise God as our divine parent and to know that we are His children means that the differences that we have created amongst ourselves on the basis of religion, creed, nation and country, are entirely false. These differences amongst us which are the cause of mutual strife, quarrels and wars, must go, and they can go only when we live with each other in the light of the great Spirit — God — that dwells within us and create a harmonious atmosphere so that all conflicts and wars may be completely eliminated from the life of humanity.

God or Truth, by whatever name we may call that supreme Truth, is dwelling in the heart of everyone of us and we must be conscious of this through surrender, through love and through meditation. So long as we dwell only on the material and mental planes, we cannot realise unity amongst ourselves on the basis of the knowledge of the supreme Spirit. Therefore we have to go deep down within ourselves through meditation, and in our external life surrender all our activities to the Divine force permeating the universe, and thereby realise our kinship with one another. The word 'religion' has got a meaning of its own. *Re* means "back," *ligare* means "to bind". So religion means "to bind back." We are separated from God and must bind ourselves back to Him. Through meditation and prayer we must unite ourselves with God, the universal Spirit, and then alone the distinctions between us

will disappear and we shall love each other with the knowledge that we are really one in Spirit.

HOW TO BRING ABOUT UNITY

So there are three ways of approach to the problem of universal brotherhood, universal oneness and kinship. These are: (1) In meditation we must realise that one Spirit pervades all beings and creatures in the world. (2) Our heart must open itself and we must love all beings on the earth as the children of one Divine parent. (3) Our actions must go to serve humanity, wherever it may be, when there is suffering, pain or sorrow. We must try our best to relieve the distress of our neighbours, our countrymen and those outside our country. We can thus expand our vision, expand our heart and also expand our soul so that we can merge our little individuality in the universal Reality. By this achievement we enjoy immortal bliss and peace.

The happiest man in the world is he who is free from selfishness, and the most miserable man is he who is utterly selfish. This is known to every one of us, but we still cling to the egoistic feeling which is responsible for the sense of separation among ourselves and our fellow-beings. So it behoves us to surrender our lives into the universal life, our soul to the universal soul and live and act always in terms of the universe and not of the individual. Just as a drop falling into the ocean becomes the ocean itself, so our individual life must merge in the universal life of the Divine and become one with the universal life. This is the supreme salvation, liberation, emancipation or divine realisation spoken of by great saints and sages and spiritual masters of the world.

So you have to merge your little individuality into the universal life and existence and love all beings on this earth equally without any distinction. This supreme love, which we practise, has been defined in the teachings of Buddha, Christ and Krishna. You will find the same teachings in the words of other great sages and saints of the world and they all tell us with one voice that we should put down this ego-sense and all the lower desires belonging to our ignorant nature, and rise above them, feel one with all beings and love all equally. By constant remembrance of the supreme Spirit, keep your mind perfectly still and calm and feel the existence of that Spirit within you, use your body in doing good to everybody, serving everybody

in a selfless spirit, and give your love to all beings without any distinction, so that by thought, feeling and action you live a life in which there is absolutely no selfishness and there will be a universality of vision, action, thought and feeling.

WHAT BUDDHA TAUGHT

You know how Buddha preached when he first got illumination under the Bodhi tree. Carrying the message of non-violence to the people, he said non-violence or Ahimsa means non-injury to any living being. This is a negative way of saying that you should love everybody. He went about preaching, and millions and millions of people became his followers. His message was carried even to distant places like China and Japan. In the East, you will find, his religion spread so widely and all of them came under his influence because his preaching was so pure and came from an enlightened one. You must have read the book "The Light of Asia" in which the author has given the life of Lord Buddha. From that you can clearly make out that he was a great figure who came to redeem humanity and make them dwell in that state of complete freedom and attain peace which is ineffable and indescribable.

So those who are real aspirants after immortality and those who are real aspirants for the status of Nirvana and those who are anxious to reach that supreme goal of oneness with the universal Existence and those who wish to know what is at the root of that Existence, should, in the first place, control the mind, free it from the lower desires and attain that tranquility which is born of their union and oneness with the universal Spirit, full of peace, power, light and joy. If you want to attain this, tune your mind, through meditation and constant remembrance, with the Divine. This practice will free the mind from lust, greed and wrath.

God has given us this human life not for enjoying the pleasures of the senses but for rising above them into that realm in which we can attain perfect peace and salvation. Religion or spiritual life does not mean only sitting silently by ourselves in a state of meditation. That practice can grant us a state of internal liberation, but we must live out our life in co-ordination, in consonance with the supreme ideal we have placed before ourselves, which is that we must be pure in thought, word and deed. Then only we shall have real meditation resulting in real liberation. We should not have hatred, illwill and bad feeling towards anybody.

RAMDAS' ADVICE TO ASPIRANTS

Ramdas takes it that you are all advanced on the path of this great Reality. He has not come so much to teach you anything as to place before you the great truths you must cherish from moment to moment in order to elevate yourselves, purify yourselves, and reach that beatific state of complete absence of all low desires. To those of you who are struggling on the path and find it difficult to control your mind, and to those among you who are finding obstacles difficult to surmount, Ramdas would advise, in the light of his experience, that you should put yourself under strict discipline, regulate your life thoroughly, so that every part of your day is spent most usefully and in a manner conducive to your spiritual advancement. This is absolutely necessary.

We sometimes aspire for God but do something which is inimical to the object we have to attain. Therefore we must co-ordinate our external life with our inner aspiration and struggle. We must have some fixed principles to follow in our daily life. For instance, we must never tell a lie under any circumstances. We must do some kindly act to somebody every day as an act of compassion done out of pure love, without expecting anything in return. We must never fly into rage. Anger is the greatest enemy of man. When anger seizes a man he is like one who has drunk wine. Under its influence he is prone to do so many things for which he will repent later. Whenever we get angry we must take the warning and feel that we have made a mistake and should never repeat it again. When we sit silently for prayer we should bring before us our weaknesses and failings and submit them before the Supreme Power. This act will wash them away. So, we must see we do not fall a prey to lust, greed and wrath. Sometimes we know very well that we are doing a wrong thing and we should stop doing it. We do the same thing over and over again, knowing fully well that the thing is wrong. That shows that we are not strong enough to control our actions and thoughts. That weakness can go only by tuning our mind with God, by constant prayer to God and meditation on Him. By such intense practices the unholy and evil emotions that rise in our heart and mind can be controlled. If we are awakened within to the consciousness of Truth, we shall never lose our temper or act rudely towards our fellow-beings.

By prayer, meditation and remembrance of God, mind can be brought under control and freed from all evil thoughts. The mind

will then become calm, still, tranquil and peaceful, and we will realise that we are one with the universal life and existence. Many of us know that when we sit silent by ourselves in a prayerful or meditative mood, our mind is wandering here and there, thinking of so many things which it ought not to think of, though the body may remain still. The mind is so fickle and agitated that we find it extremely difficult to still it. What has to be done then? Some people cry out to God that their mind is so difficult to control and that they are unable to keep it one-pointed. They therefore offer to God their entire being and by His grace get the necessary strength to control the mind. Ramdas can tell you from his own experience what helped him to attain control of mind.

GOD'S GUIDANCE

At the beginning, when Ramdas was trying to remember God and concentrate his mind on Him continuously, he found it very difficult. His mind was restless. He had no attraction for the things of the world. Yet the mind would run here and there. Then God suggested to him that if he could remember Him constantly by taking His holy name, it would purify his mind and make it still. He was repeating the Mantra given to him by his father. The Mantra stood for God and by the repetition of the Mantra, gradually the wandering mind was arrested and he became tranquil. In that tranquility, when he sat silent, his mind became perfectly still. In the stillness of the mind he felt that he was not the body but the universal Spirit, which is beyond the body, mind, senses, etc., and which is the substratum of the universal manifestation. So you find that the repetition of God's name helps to remove the superficial activities of the mind and draw it inwards to get the light, joy and peace that is within you.

Q: What have you to say about communism?

Ramdas: Communism without violence is true religion.

HONGKONG

AT SRI RUTTONJI'S HOUSE, HONGKONG

18th Novembet, 1954.

HOW CONFESSION OF SINS HELPS

Q: Are the sins that we commit every day done away with by confession ?

Ramdas: According to the Karma theory, for whatever we have done we must either get good results or bad results. God is all forgiveness, all love and all goodness. No evil can come from Him. It is due to our sense of separation from Him that we are prone to do things for which we have to suffer. Sin is nothing but action done with this sense of separation or ego-sense. God is not responsible for it. If we approach Him for His grace and forgiveness, He is ready to forgive us and He will also grant us the necessary strength to mend our life and lead a better one in future. Very often we find that we are doing a wrong action and if we want to mend ourselves, we are unable to do so. That shows that we are weak, but if we think of God and pray to Him for His guidance and His grace, we shall derive strength to battle against these temptations and conquer our weaknesses.

BENEFITS OF KARMA THEORY

Man's weakness is responsible for all his evil acts for which he later suffers. But suffering is very helpful to him in that it will lead him nearer and nearer to God. You will find that this is true with regard to the teachings of all the great sages and saints of the world. For our sufferings or happiness we alone are responsible. If we do good we shall reap good fruit and if we do evil we shall reap evil fruit. For example, take the case of a man who is given to vicious habits. After leading a vicious life for sometime, he feels that he should turn over a new leaf. He tries to mend himself but is unable to do so. If he prays to God, God gives him strength to overcome all the temptations. Karma theory helps us in three ways. It makes us bear all sufferings patiently. We do not blame anybody else for our sufferings because we know we ourselves are responsible and the others who cause us suffering are merely instruments. So our attitude towards them

remains friendly and there is no feeling of retaliation. As we know that we have to suffer for whatever wrong we do, we shall be careful to see that we do only good actions and keep away from bad actions.

Q: Do all sufferings for our evil actions come in this life itself or do they continue?

Ramdas: Sometimes sufferings come in this life and they may continue also. Sufferings are of two kinds, mental and physical. You can eliminate mental sufferings by realising the immortal Spirit within you. Even after realisation, the physical sufferings may continue, but you will be able to say then that they concern only the body. Suppose there is illness. You know it is only for the body. If there is any loss of property, which in the ordinary course ought to affect the mind, it does not affect you now.

HELL AND HEAVEN

Q: Can you say something about the conception of hell and heaven?

Ramdas: They are here and not outside. Mind in its own place can make a hell of heaven and a heaven of hell. A man full of worries, anxieties, fears and sorrows, is virtually living in hell, whereas a man full of joy lives in heaven. Hell and heaven are creations of the mind. We are to aim at a state of complete freedom from the mind, at something that is beyond the mind.

At present our life is like a pendulum moving betwixt a smile and a tear. Now we are happy, the next moment we are miserable; now in heaven, the next moment in hell. All these states of being are self-created. God is not in any way responsible for them. If we hold on to God, we are saved; if we do not, we fall. Real happiness consists in turning our mind towards God and leading a pure and righteous life, wishing well of everybody, loving everybody and giving ourselves away for the benefit and uplift of others. This is how we can lead a life of real purity and righteousness, which will take us to the eternal state of freedom, freedom from the cycle of birth and death, freedom from hell and heaven. People ask why we are fighting in the world amongst ourselves. This is because people have forgotten God. God is a great unifying force and if we recognise Him as the indwelling Spirit, in the light of this realisation and knowledge, we shall be able to live in harmony. We have forgotten that we are all manifestations of the one supreme Spirit, God is not far away

from us. He is seated in the hearts of everyone of us. If we are conscious of Him by continuous remembrance, prayer or meditation, our life will be completely changed. All the impurities of the mind will disappear, our heart will become pure and so also all our actions. Our love will be overflowing to everybody and we shall derive true peace in the world.

WORLD TEACHER COMING ?

Q: Is it true that a World Teacher is coming soon?

Ramdas: If all people wish that such a great Teacher should come, he will surely come. Such Teachers come by the wish of people. Avatars are the unmanifest Reality appearing in flesh and blood at the call of the people. You know the Sloka in the Bhagavad Gita:

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

"Whenever there is a decline of law, O Arjuna, and an outbreak of lawlessness I incarnate myself."

Q: Does He not come by His own wish?

Ramdas: He does not come unless we call Him. God is everywhere. Just as milk is everywhere in the cow, but is available through the udder alone, so also, although He is invisibly pervading everywhere, we cannot have Him as an Avatar, unless we call Him. He is the all-pervading Truth. We can feel Him, know Him, and see Him, provided we feel the need for Him. People do not feel the need for Him. If you tell them, "This is God on the one side and that is wealth on the other side; you can take any one you choose", they will prefer only wealth.

HEREDITY AND REINCARNATION

Q: Being a Chinese I often think that we have continuation of life, etc., and thus each generation tries to do its best so that the next generation may do still better. So, life is eternal. What is your opinion about it?

Ramdas: Ramdas told you his conclusion from what he understood, felt, and realised according to the Hindu way of approach to this problem. He has explained whether there is one life or a series of lives; that before we came to this present life we had a series of lives before, and there will also be a series of

lives after this life. So long as we maintain our individual sense and so long as we cling to the perishable part of us, we are caught in this cycle of birth and death.

But there is one thing. What you say seems to be a case of heredity. By handing over some of one's traits, etc., to one's son, and the son in turn to his son and so on, the traits are continued from generation to generation and we may call this heredity. Heredity may also be taken as part of the evolution necessary for the soul's progress until it reaches perfection. If one wishes to have his father reborn as his son, this often happens. We are generally reborn in places and of persons we are deeply attached to.

IS IT RELIGION?

Ramdas is not conversant with the Chinese philosophy. He has read something about the philosophy of Lao Tzu and Confucius. He has understood the essentials of all the great teachings and they agree fundamentally. But there is so much discord among the followers of various religions. While God should be the uniting force, people are fighting in the name of God. In the ceremonial side people differ, but to fight in the name of God is indeed terrible. One day Ramdas had been to see the Abbot of a monastery in Switzerland. In that place one locality belongs to the Roman Catholics and another to the Protestants. Ramdas heard that a Roman Catholic cannot go in his usual dress to the Protestant area.

It is better that we do not belong to any religion. We must love all equally. Ramdas had been to many places where he visited Christian monasteries, churches, and temples, and everywhere he had access because he did not belong to any particular creed, cult or religion. He is free like a bird out of a cage. If you get yourself engaged within a sect or creed, you cannot see beyond that. You are then subject to likes and dislikes and your mind is in a state of turmoil.

What is the use of saying that we belong to this religion or that? We must feel one with all beings and creatures in the world. We must love all alike. So, to which religion should we belong? To no religion. Religion means "to bind back to God from whom we have been separated." God is the universal Spirit and to bind ourselves back to Him means to realise the universal Spirit and to have universal vision. To say that this is not our

sect and this is not our religion, and still to speak of God, is very strange, and shows that we do not know what God is. It is said that a man who says he loves God, but does not love his neighbour, is a liar. True religion is a religion of love and service. Love all alike, have no illwill towards anybody, be compassionate, be tolerant, bear all things calmly and cheerfully. These are the qualities of true love. If we have developed that love, we shall be ever-cheerful.

WHAT IS A *VIBHUTI* ?

Q: Please say something about the soul and the sense of "me" and "mine".

Ramdas: The feeling of "me" and "mine" should go. It is born of the sense of separation from the Reality. 'Soul' is a word which has got many meanings. We do not know in what way we can use it. If it means the individual, it must go. When the individuality goes, still the mind has got some kind of consciousness of separation, a thin veil of separation from fellow-beings. This is called illumined individuality or illumined personality. He knows he is liberated, but still maintains the individuality. He is a vehicle. In the Bhagavad Gita he is called a *Vibhuti* through whom the Divine reveals Himself and works for the good of others. All great Souls like Krishna, Buddha and Christ had an individuality, but not the individuality as of others. An ordinary man exploits others for his own comforts. But this individuality is a purified and superior individuality which is full of light, peace and joy.

INTERPRETATION OF "GOD"

Q: The idea of God is individual?

Ramdas: "God" is a word which has been misinterpreted. They say that He is a personal God living somewhere in the heavens and dispensing justice with a rod of iron. That is why some people are shy of the word "God". They say, Truth, Reality and so on. Ramdas uses the word "God" as a supra-universal Reality, who has become the whole universe and who has manifested Himself as all of us and who is the one dominating power that activates the whole universe. At the background of this power there is the calm, silent and static Spirit. You may call this Reality, Truth or God. Whatever you may call it, this is the static, calm, radiant, and all-pervading Spirit. There is only

one, there are no two. But the one appears as two or many. The one is all-inclusive, all-comprehensive, and all-transcendent God. He is closer to us than any part of our being. It is He who releases us from this bondage.

EVOLUTION OF ANIMALS

Q: Human beings can, by their endeavour, get emancipation. How about animals?

Ramdas: Animals can evolve into human beings and then struggle for emancipation. In the animal state, they cannot do anything themselves towards final emancipation. They are gradually evolved to higher forms of life and they will become human beings some day and in that state they will strive for liberation and attain it. In the animal body there is no scope for attaining liberation because animals have no sense of understanding, discrimination or intellectual power. Only man is gifted with all these things. That is why he is considered to be the head of creation. He has a mind and intellect to distinguish the right from the wrong, and the power to reject what is wrong. He can distinguish the real from the unreal and accept what is real.

EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN

Q: Everything you said about man, would you apply to woman also unreservedly?

Ramdas: Yes. Equal place can be given to women also. Everybody is a form of the Divine power. All forms are only the infinite waves of the waveless ocean or the changeless Truth. They are forms of the formless. They are the external expressions of the eternal Truth. To realise the eternal Truth, we have to transcend the idea of names and forms, and when we have done so, where is the question of sex? Men and women are all embodiments of the one Divinity.

AT THE SRI AUROBINDO PHILOSOPHICAL CIRCLE,
HONGKONG.

21st November, 1954.

Dear friends, — Ramdas is going to tell you what was the purpose of his having started from India on this world tour. The purpose was the same as that for which he was touring in India itself for the last many years, from the time he got the vision of Divinity within himself and everywhere about him. From that time, through the grace of God, when he attained the realisation of the infinite existence, love, power and joy of God, he has been going about telling everybody about it, so that those who are struggling for that eternal state of bliss and peace may be helped by Ramdas' experiences which he laid before them.

RAMDAS' SEARCH FOR TRUTH

When the great awakening came to him about 33 years ago, he found that whatever he saw round about him was not stable and permanent, and therefore his search was for something eternal. This aspiration, keen and intense, seized him for realising the immortal Reality that never passes away, never changes, and never appears or disappears. He very well knew that the world before him was perishable, and to attach himself to the things of the world meant misery, pain and sorrow. Still the mind was not willing to go deep down within himself to find the Source of this life which is immortal. So, God in His infinite mercy taught Ramdas to repeat His holy name constantly. By this practice the restless nature of the mind was curbed and he was able to keep it absorbed or lost in Divine consciousness. Then God gave him the knowledge and experience of the immortal, all-pervading, static, calm, and silent existence, and in that he was so much lost that the world ceased to have any attraction for him. In fact, for some time, the world did not exist for him. In this state of complete forgetfulness of the world and with only the holy Name constantly on his tongue, God made him leave the place and go wandering throughout the length and breadth of India.

RAMDAS' UNIVERSAL VISION

In the course of his wanderings he came in contact with great saints and sages, and through those contacts his mind got more and more stabilised in that higher consciousness, and he began to see everywhere, in the manifestation, one Divinity, one Truth and one Existence. In this realisation of the static aspect of the Divine, he enjoyed peace and bliss which is simply inexpressible and indescribable. In that state of perfect bliss and peace, all the desires of the flesh had completely vanished. He not only felt that there was one Existence in the formless, but in the manifestation also he saw the one Existence and Truth, that is, the formless as manifesting itself everywhere. So the sense of duality completely left him and he began to tell everybody to dip into this infinite sea of divine Existence and lose themselves in it so that they can attain a state of perfect release, perfect freedom, peace and bliss. •

PERFECT RELEASE—A POSITIVE STATE

You may depend upon it, this is not a negative state, but a positive one. Naturally, by the coming of light, darkness vanishes. It is the Divine light which dispels the darkness of ignorance. This is achieved not by negation but only by positive assertion of the Divine within you, because you are the very expression or manifestation of the Divine. In this universal, all-comprehensive and all-transcendent consciousness, your ego-sense completely vanishes and there is only Truth for you and none other. You see yourself manifest everywhere. You see yourself revealed everywhere. You alone exist and there is no other, because the feeling of the other is based upon the sense of separation born of ignorance. This is found when you go deep within yourself into that infinite light and know that *that* light alone is real, and there is nothing other than that light.

What is ignorance after all? Ignorance is the sense of separation from that Reality which is our real being. So long as the sense of separation is there, we are bound to be born again and again. The sense of separation is utterly false, and it is the cause of our pain, misery and sorrow. The moment we know that we are that Reality, we are entirely free from the cycle of birth and death, fear, sorrow and anxiety. All these belong to the individual life which we superimposed on ourselves by ignorance. It is

for us to break this shadow in which we have been caught. We think we are individuals, whereas we are the infinite Reality. This is what we have to find out first.

THE SOUL IN IGNORANCE

Now Ramdas will try to explain to you what this ignorance means to a soul caught in the toils of this lower life. Lower life is made up of three qualities as described in the Bhagavad Gita. They are Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas—harmony, motion and inertia. In these three qualities we are caught. The question is often asked "Who am I?" I am not the body, I am not the senses, I am not the mind, I am not the intellect, I am not the heart, I am not anything that is felt or thought of. I am beyond all these. To know this we have to transcend the qualities of nature. We have to free ourselves from the tangle of the pairs of opposites such as gain and loss, praise and blame, honour and dishonour, victory and defeat, etc. All these belong to our lower nature. When we are fixed in the awareness or the consciousness of the Reality, we are unaffected by these. We remain in a state of perfect equipoise and tranquility under all conditions. To realise this supreme goal of life, we must live in the world loving all alike, irrespective of what attitude the people round about have for us, whether they praise us or blame us. This is the sign of a man who has realised the Truth. If he is affected by sufferings then he has not found the Truth. We should rise above the three qualities and pairs of opposites, and fix ourselves in that supreme state of freedom which is the birthright of all human beings.

THE PATH OF FREEDOM

To start with, we must try to give up gradually the Asuric or demoniac qualities which are responsible for keeping our mind restless, and we should try to develop the divine qualities. When the divine nature reveals itself in us, it will make us feel for the sufferings of others and we shall have compassion and love for the suffering. Our heart will be overflowing in its love, expressing itself in spontaneous service for the relief of the sufferings of all alike. Our life will become an offering at the altar of humanity. This is why we are born as human beings. We have forgotten this and have therefore developed the devilish nature as a result of which we are trying to kill one another instead of being kind.

and loving. That is why Ramdas is going about telling everybody to have universal love. This can be had only when we realise the unity of the Spirit. We cannot love everybody on the physical plane and also on the mental plane. We can take only some friends in our fold because of some mental attractions. But we should know that the Spirit that pervades everywhere unites us all into one. That Spirit must be the basis of everything that we do in this world. In that you will find supreme peace and freedom. We are wrong in thinking that in grabbing and exploiting others we can make ourselves happy.

THE IDEAL LIFE

A friend asked whether the life lived in America was ideal. No. America may be rolling in riches, but it has not found its soul. Any country that has not found its soul can have no peace. It is for the fulfilment of this supreme purpose that God has granted us this human life. We forget that ideal and are toiling day and night for the baubles that cannot come with us when we shed our bodies. We take with us only the burden of all the sinful acts we have done. This is not the purpose of our life. We must free ourselves from the tangle of Karma by feeling that "I am not the doer."

Here Ramdas remembers the words of Sri Aurobindo: "You may possess things, but you must not be possessed by them." You are now possessed by things and you think certain things belong to you and to you alone. A man who has got a lot of wealth is the most miserable person. How rightly it is said: "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown". You should toil for the sake of humanity, not for the sake of a few, and thereby break the fetters in which you are caught. You must love everybody and meditate upon that supreme Reality so that you can realise that you are one with It. So many people pray to God, but their outside life does not co-ordinate with their inner aspirations. If they are divergent, if they are not compatible with each other, no benefit will be derived by spiritual discipline. How can you control your mind when your outer life is not pure? You are selfish, you are grabbing and you want to do everything for your own selfish pleasures. If you go on living such a life, what benefit can you derive by meditation? You must be kind, compassionate and forgiving, and you must be pure in thought, word and deed. When you fill your mind with the name of God, you will not be

able to do any evil. And even when temptations come, you will have the strength to control your mind. Now, man has become the slave of his mind and is therefore caught up in the ignorant life, which he is leading day and night. You must widen your vision through the repetition of God's name.

TEST OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

We go through so many spiritual disciplines. We go to temples, monasteries, churches, and also visit places of pilgrimage. We go into solitude. All these things are done with the hope of attaining that supreme goal of life, liberation. But how far have we been successful in our attempts to achieve this goal? Very often we find that all these efforts end in frustration. If they help us to go within ourselves and commune with the basis of our life, the immortal Spirit, then our efforts will not have gone in vain. It is not by going to this place or that, we can attain our goal. It can be done only by drawing our mind inward and losing ourselves in the superconsciousness within. Otherwise, we shall be simply moving in a circle, as it were, finding no solace, no peace and no rest.

NAME—THE ONLY REMEDY

Where is liberation to come from? We are all really liberated souls. We have forgotten about it, we are ignorant of it. The ignorance must go and that can go only through constant contemplation of the Divine, through constant remembrance of and meditation on the Divine within us. Ramdas finds that the mind has no existence at all. It seems to exist through some peculiar circumstances which may be called ignorance. But it seems to be an obstacle in our path, a screen between ourselves and the Reality. When, through the repetition of the Name, the mind dissolves, we become aware of what we are. So Ramdas is prescribing this easy way of approach to that Source of our life, viz., the repetition of God's name. Ramdas never did anything else. He did so many other Sadhanas only to test how far they were efficacious, but he found no other Sadhana in any way helpful to him. He practised Patanjali Yoga, and had visions that came and disappeared. Though they gave him a glimpse of peace, when they disappeared he was again in darkness. These visions that we see are preliminary stepping stones. We have

still to go a long way. The mind must vanish completely. When we go deep down beyond the forms, mind and senses, into the depthless Spirit which we are in reality, the sense of duality completely disappears. The seer and the seen, hearer and the heard, disappear. This is the realisation of absolute oneness through Samadhi, a state of trance, in which we rise above the body, mind and intellect, and dwell in the universal consciousness.

NEED FOR SELF-IMPOSED DISCIPLINE

Q: When spiritual awakening comes, does one stay in that always?

Ramdas: When you feel that that awakening is waning away or fading away, you should seek the company of great souls and keep it intact. That awakening makes you go forward on the path. There are so many who got the awakening and lost it. Without proper company, proper spiritual exercises and proper discipline, one cannot maintain it. Awakening must be there and it must be followed up by proper contacts and discipline. Discipline is very important in life. Systematic life will make you walk fast on the path. Mere reading of books will not help you.

The best discipline is that which you impose upon yourself and not anything imposed upon you by others. There are so many who impose discipline upon others, but the hearts of those people, on whom such discipline is imposed, revolt. You must find out, according to your own nature, in what way you can discipline your life; the timings, the method and ways of approach, etc. All these you must write down as a schedule for your daily routine, and you must strictly adhere to it. Don't be erratic. You must progress steadily. There are certain principles to be observed. But you should not feel you are observing them simply because somebody forces you to do so. Ramdas imposed discipline upon himself according to the inner voice that spoke and guided him and he was always happy, however difficult it was. He remained at night in the thick of forests, in the midst of tigers and other wild animals; sometimes he got food and at other times he did not get any, but he did not care. He underwent all this very cheerfully because the discipline was self-imposed.

Q: Our ultimate end is freedom, and we have to be free of discipline. Discipline is therefore the cause and the result is freedom. We start with discipline and our final aim is freedom.

Ramdas: The means is discipline and the end is freedom. A bird is caught in a cage and it struggles to be free. What is the means of attaining freedom? Breaking the cage. Discipline is breaking the cage. So breaking the cage is the means and freedom is the result or end.

Q: Breaking of the cage causes freedom, but discipline is not freedom in itself.

Ramdas: That means, if freedom is there, then there is no discipline necessary. Freedom is to be attained through discipline. So if discipline is itself freedom, then it is no discipline. It is freedom only. Discipline is a means to an end. If you want to pass your M. A. examination, you must discipline yourself, you must attend colleges, and study. All these are means to get the M. A. degree. So also, if you want to attain freedom, you have to undergo a certain discipline to break the bondage of the ego, individual sense, ignorance, or Karma. Discipline is therefore the means for freedom. If discipline is itself freedom it cannot be called discipline.

Q: Are you under any discipline now?

Ramdas: No. When you have broken the cage and come out, where is the question of breaking the cage any more?

STRUGGLE IS TO KNOW 'YOU ARE THAT'

Q: Was there a cage at all?

Ramdas: To know that, discipline is necessary. If you sit in the cage and say that you are not in the cage, it does not solve your problem. You come to know that there is no cage, only after liberation. Now Ramdas wonders why he had to do all these Sadhanas. He does not find any cage at all. He now realises that he was always free; that he was what he is now, even before. So he tells everybody, "You are that Truth." What is there for you to do? It is not anything new that you have to attain. Therefore it is called realisation and not attainment. Attaining something means getting something that you haven't got. For the time being, you feel you are not That, and your struggle is only to know that you are That. Supposing some dust falls in your eye, and you feel irritation and therefore unhappy. You go to a doctor. He removes it and you feel happy. Is it any new happiness that you have attained? You only regained what you had before, but had temporarily lost. Somehow we feel that we are not That. Some ignorance, veil or Maya is the cause of this.

When that is removed, we shall find that we were already That.

Q: The dust may fall in the eye again ?

Ramdas: No. When you realise once what you are, you are no longer caught by ignorance. You are eternally free. Your life becomes one with the universal life. There is no likelihood of your relapsing into ignorance again.

IS GOD A PERSONALITY

Q: Is God a personality ?

Ramdas: For Ramdas the personality of God is the person who has realised God. God is personal and impersonal. The impersonal Truth has revealed or expressed itself as personal, like Buddha, who is the personification of the Reality. He is a person worthy of worship because he is the personal expression of the impersonal. The supreme Spirit is manifest in him. So we worship Buddha, keeping him before us as an ideal. So also Christ. The Father he speaks of is the impersonal and the son is the personal aspect of the impersonal. Christ says "I and my Father are one." That shows clearly that he is the embodiment or expression of that Spirit whom he calls Father. Buddha is the personal representation of the impersonal Nirvana, Bodhi Sattwa.

Q: In what form does God reveal Himself to the realised soul ?

Ramdas: In the form in which He is worshipped. God is formless. The devotee worships Him in a certain form. In that form He appears before him.

Q: Does he talk like an individual ?

Ramdas: Yes. The form that Ramdas saw before him was dancing with a flute in hand.

FORMS NOT IMPORTANT

Q: As an Indian I can believe this, but many foreigners cannot believe you when you say the Infinite can limit Himself to a particular form.

Ramdas: Some people would have it this way. When the form comes and stands before you or dances before you, you say that *that* form is the projection of the mind, because you have intensely thought of that form in your mind through meditation, and it has revealed itself before you in that particular form. This

is all on the relative plane. When you reach the absolute plane or when you want to reach the absolute plane, you do not attach any importance to these forms. They do not mean much to you. They are projections of the mind, because everything is a projection of the mind. The universe itself is a projection of the mind. It has nothing to do with the basic Reality which is only a witness to this manifestation. On the manifest aspect of the universal existence you will find all these things happening. These appear and disappear. The form of Krishna appeared before Ramdas, but he never craved for it or wanted it. He told Krishna that he would be satisfied only with the universal vision, as forms would appear and disappear, giving joy and sorrow alternately. He wanted to realise the Divine everywhere. He wanted to see the whole universe filled with the presence of the Divine. He wanted to realise the oneness of the Divine. Some people do not like to have visions of forms and therefore they do not get them. It is not necessary that everybody should see these forms. Ramdas had the vision of Buddha also. He felt happy, but he never asked for it again. He had the vision of Christ in the Himalayas and was thrilled, Ramdas did not attach much importance to these, though he wrote down such experiences.

Q: Since you say we are from that supreme Reality . . .

Ramdas: We are the Reality and not from the Reality.

THE INSCRUTABLE BEGINNING

Q: How and when did we find we are individuals?

Ramdas: We do not see the beginning of it, but it is there. How it came about and why it came, our intellect is unable to find out, as it is too poor to gauge the way of the Infinite. But we know we are caught, and our concern is only how to get out of the cage. If we sit here and contemplate how we got into the cage, and go on thinking about the cage all the life, we shall never get out of it. So how we happened to be caught, is not the question. The intellect cannot think of the unthinkable. Intellect can understand everything except the Power behind that works the intellect, just as the tongs that you hold can grasp everything outside but not the fingers with which they are held.

AT THE SRI LAKSHMI NARAYAN TEMPLE, HONGKONG.
21st November, 1954.

UNIVERSAL LOVE AND SERVICE

Beloved Friends,—Ramdas addresses you as friends, considering you as not separate from his eternal Master, Ram¹, whom Ramdas has been made to see in all beings and creatures for the past 30 years or more. You are verily, for him, the embodiments of Divinity. As such, to tell you anything about the realisation of the great ideal of universal love and service seems to be superfluous. However, you have given Ramdas an opportunity to speak to you out of the fullness of his heart, because on such occasions he can express his feelings about the great Truth which has been his ideal, his idol, his aim and his everything all these years.

PURE LOVE THE PRECURSOR OF GOD-REALISATION

Now Ramdas will try to tell you how we can put into practice this great ideal of universal love and service. Universal love and service presupposes the realisation of the universal Truth. There is only one unchanging, all-pervading, eternal principle, which you may call God, Truth, Reality or by any name you like. Based upon the realisation of this Truth alone, we can have the universal vision from which comes the next step, viz., universal love and service. What is needed is that we should decentralise ourselves in order to attain this beatific vision. Decentralisation means reducing our ego-sense to nothing. Ego-sense is an obsession which has no reality about it. Somehow it has caught us and we are subject to this individual sense which keeps us separated from Divinity and from His manifestation, the universe before us. Essentially, this 'I' of ours, the universe, and the great God whom we worship, are one and the same. But through ignorance we think that these three are different entities, with the result that we live in duality, which is the source of our unhappiness, misery, fear, cares and worries. If we want to free ourselves from this unhappy state, it is necessary that we should realise the all-pervading Spirit, which is our real being and existence.

DEVOTION THE STARTING POINT

The first step that leads us to this great vision and experience is the constant remembrance of this great Truth through the repetition of His holy name which is all-powerful and sweet. Unless our mind becomes purified and concentrated, we cannot realise who we really are. We think man is only a bundle of sensations, a physical body of five elements and an intellectual entity. But these are only appearances. The Real Being in us is entirely different. It is the substratum of our manifest existence. If we lose sight of this supreme Truth within us, we are caught in a trap, our life becomes restless, and there will be no peace for us. Therefore it is necessary that we should constantly remember this. The easy way of keeping up this continuous stream of thought is the repetition of God's holy name.

EASY WAY OF CONCENTRATION

Ramdas found from his experience that there was no easier or more effective way to concentrate the mind than the taking of His holy name. When the Name is repeated, it removes from the mind all its impurities and makes the mind still. In the still state God reveals Himself, and we become conscious of His existence within us. Until then, the struggle goes on. Very often we search for happiness outside. Happiness is within and God is the source of all happiness. So, to attain happiness, we must naturally tune our mind with Him through constant remembrance. So devotion is the starting point. Through devotion it is that you repeat His name, through devotion you pray to Him, and through devotion you do all actions for His sake, and then your ego-sense disappears and you ultimately realise that you and He are one. In the process you will find that your attachment for the perishable things of the world gets slackened until your mind becomes detached from the external world and gets tuned to the Divine within you to such an extent that the mind as such disappears and you become aware that you are the immortal, all-pervading, infinite Reality yourself.

This is the result of devotion offered to the Divine through constant remembrance. There are various ways of approach; some try to approach Him through discrimination, some through Yogic practices, and some by methods of Yogic Kriya and so on; but the best method is to approach Him through devotion. Bhakti is the

word used in India for devotion. Bhakti means intense longing and love for God. If we have got this keen aspiration to realise Him, our mind will always be filled with His remembrance and as a result of this it will be enlightened and will become still and calm. When we have achieved this state, we merge our little individuality in His cosmic reality and we feel one with Him. So devotion leads to Jnana, which is the realisation of our identity with Him. We are awakened to the consciousness that we are not different from the Divine. This is the second stage. From devotion you get to knowledge and from knowledge you have to go to another state which is called Parabhakti, supreme devotion, in which you behold the whole universe as the expression or manifestation of God.

VISWARUPA DARSHAN

In the Bhagavad Gita you read in the eleventh chapter about the *Viswarupa Darshan*, that is, beholding everything as Divine in the vast universe. Verily, the universe is looked upon as one image of God. Just as innumerable waves rise on the ocean and all the waves are of the same water, so we are all expressions of the same infinite Truth. If we get this vision in the Parabhakti state, it fulfils completely our aspiration for the realisation of God in all His aspects; God as the infinite life, God as infinite knowledge and God as infinite bliss and peace. The moment our ego-sense disappears in this universal vision and experience, we enjoy bliss and peace which are ineffable.

Therefore our great sages and saints in all parts of the world have been dinning into our ears not to waste this precious human life running after the ephemeral pleasures of the world, but to seek the Eternal by which alone we can get real happiness. The quest of every creature is happiness. But where can they get such happiness? We seek for it in external things and external enjoyments. Whatever happiness we get from such external enjoyments is not stable and permanent, and is mixed with pain and sorrow. Pain follows such pleasures as night follows day. To obtain real happiness we have to go within ourselves and there find our real being which is bliss itself and which we have forgotten. We should draw our vision inward and think of God so that our mind may be merged in that supreme Reality and we may experience the bliss born of immortality. This is God-realisation. This is the vision which will give us universal love and peace. Freedom

comes to us as a result of liberation from the bondage of ignorance and desires. So long as we are seized by desires for the perishable things of the world, we cannot know anything about the Eteinal which is our real being. We are so much caught up in the external activities. We should remember God, pray to Him, and do everything in His name; in other words, we should dedicate our lives to Him completely.

WORK FOR GOD'S SAKE

For dedication of our actions to Him, it is not necessary that we should give up our usual occupations. We have only to do everything in His name and for His sake. Krishna never asked Arjuna to give up the work allotted to him by society and by the conditions in which he lived. He told Arjuna that he should do everything in His name. It is equally applicable to us. This is possible only when we remember God constantly. The consciousness that "I am the doer" must disappear. We must feel that we are only servants and He is the master who makes us do everything. We cannot at once jump into His being. We have to be His servants and walk on the path of righteousness, and know that we are being guided by Him. We must have His constant remembrance, and for such remembrance the easy way is to take His holy name *constantly*, not for a few minutes every day. We must keep the name of God on our lips, even when we are working, sitting or doing anything with our hands and feet. The result will be indeed wonderful. Our mind will become peaceful, and will never get depressed under any conditions. The presence of God will be always felt by us; the very remembrance of God will make us aware of His being within us, because He is the all-pervading Spirit. We do not feel His presence because we have forgotten Him. If we constantly remember Him, He is sure to be our protector and guide in every way.

GOD'S ASSURANCE.

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

"To those people who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, to those ever harmonious, I bring full security." The Sloka is a great assurance to us from God. What we have to do is to keep

up a continuous stream of His remembrance. This is very easily done by taking His name. We do not have to do severe austerities or penance. We have only to sing the sweet name of God, without any formality, without any rituals. Our heart will then be alight with the illumination of God, with the bliss and peace of God. In the 18th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita the Lord says, "*Sarva Dharman Parityajya*" After giving lessons on Yoga of various kinds, the Lord teaches us to surrender to Him completely and assures us that He will liberate us from all sins. The ultimate thing is self-surrender. His will is supreme. Then no kind of dejection, fear or anxiety, will ever disturb our minds. The mind will be ever in peace.

People do not know what the name of God can do. Those who repeat it constantly can alone know its power. It can purify our mind completely. No other Sadhana can do that. While the other Sadhanas can take us only to a certain stage, the Name can take us to the summit of spiritual experience. There is an assurance in the Bhagavad Gita that he who sees the Lord everywhere and everything in Him is never lost. This shows that when the devotee sees God everywhere, he has reached the natural state. There is nothing higher. That is the state of complete liberation and freedom, which is reached through the power of the Divine name.

Q: What is the difference between sleep and Samadhi?

Ramdas: Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was asked this question and he replied: "A fool goes to sleep and returns a fool. A fool goes into Samadhi and returns a wise man." When you go to Samadhi, you get the awareness that you are the Divine. During Samadhi you are intensely awake and aware. You are not asleep. It is not unconsciousness. It is intense consciousness.

WHY RAMDAS GOES TO THE RICH

Q: Why should you stay in big hotels and not in poor men's houses?

Ramdas: You take him there and he will be putting up there. Friends arrange for his stay in a hotel and therefore he stays there. This is a general question, and it has become a common feeling with people of poor means who wish to accommodate Ramdas in their houses. If Ramdas stays with them, they will not be able to give the necessary facilities for all the people who come to see him every day. If Ramdas stays with a rich man he will be able

to do that, to make elaborate arrangements for Bhajans, meetings and talks, and also to take Ramdas to meet various devotees. Another reason is that if he stays with the rich, he can make them open their purses for the service of the poor, and at the same time make them see the sufferings of the poor.

SINGAPORE AND MALAYA

AT THE GANDHI MEMORIAL HALL, SINGAPORE.

26th November, 1954.

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Beloved Friends,—Ramdas stands before you as a humble servant of God. By His will this servant left India about three months ago on a world tour, purely on a spiritual mission, to propagate the ideal of universal love and service. Ramdas speaks in the third person, and you will kindly bear with him. About 33 years ago, after he was made to pass through severe austerities continuously taking the Divine name, one day he found he could not say "I". From that time he has been speaking about himself in the third person. Ramdas left India and visited Europe, America, Japan and Hongkong. Since he does not belong to any particular community, creed or sect, he was able to freely go to all spiritual centres in all these places, presided over by great souls and saints. He had the pleasure of visiting a Catholic monastery in Switzerland and another in France, and also of seeing and spending some time with a Sufi saint. He visited many churches and met many Christian priests. He also went to many Hindu temples and other spiritual centres. Everywhere he found thousands of people, adhering to these spiritual institutions, who are engaged in spiritual discipline for the realisation of the Divine, as they know that by realising the Divine they can spread peace and goodwill in the world. Ramdas found all over the world a spiritual awakening. The present time is such that we should have a divine consciousness.

WAY TO ACHIEVE PEACE

Through the awareness of the Divine alone we can bring about true peace in the world. No doubt, effort is being made by great leaders of the world on the material plane to bring about peace and harmony; but Ramdas does not see any trace of their success. The only way left for us is to turn our mind within ourselves and find out the true and everlasting basis or source from which alone we can get true happiness and peace in the world. The basis is God who is dwelling in the hearts of everyone

of us. He is the universal Spirit. If we so adjust the conduct of our life as to mutually help each other and look upon all as children and offspring of the Lord, then alone there is hope of our bringing about amity and avoiding the war that is threatening us. We saw in Germany how much destruction was wrought during the last war. The same is the case in France and Holland. The world has suffered intensely during the last war, and to avoid another war is possible only if everybody thinks of God. If we constantly remember Him, He reveals Himself within us. He is a tremendous force that will release a powerful influence in the world, making war absolutely impossible. Therefore the scriptural message which Ramdas has given to all the people in the world is "universal love and service." This can be practised on the basis of the universal Reality—God. As we turn our mind towards God, we shall be turning away from low passions, desires and aspirations. Gradually our desires will disappear and we shall learn to love each other on the basis of the universal Spirit that activates us every moment of our life. We are unconscious of that Spirit and therefore we are hating each other.

Buddha, Christ, Krishna, Mohammed and so many other incarnations and saints of the world have been dinning into our ears that we must have unity. We must realise the Divinity that is residing in the hearts of everyone of us, and in the realisation of the Divinity we must live as friends. This is the only way by which we can bring about peace in the world. Otherwise we shall be heading towards another war, although there is no chance of another war. We are already fed up with the last two wars.

There is so much agony caused to the people in the world on account of war. A kind of panic has seized mankind everywhere. They dread the mere idea of another war. Many saints and sages in the world are trying to create an atmosphere which will make war impossible. We on our part should contribute what we can towards this end. We can do it only by having the thought of God. God is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. If we intensely wish that there should be no war in the world, by His grace our wish will be fulfilled and we shall be able to attain the state of peace and harmony here and now.

MAHATMA GANDHI'S EXAMPLE

Ramdas wishes to speak on this occasion a few words about Mahatma Gandhi in whose name this beautiful building has been

erected. Mahatmaji was a lover of God and a lover of humanity. A man who says that he loves God and does not love humanity is a liar. If we have real faith in God and love God, we must love our fellow-beings. Otherwise we are not sincere in our love for God. Therefore Mahatma Gandhi was a lover of humanity. Essentially he was a saint. His life fully bears out what a spiritually illumined saint he was and we can take so many lessons from his life. One lesson we can learn is that he never forgot God. On the basis of that spiritual force which he realised by contact with God, he was able to bring freedom to India and also to a vast number of human beings in the world outside India. Ramdas had heard in many places that he is looked upon by thousands as a great saint and his spirit of non-violence has a great lesson for them all.

Non-violence is another word for love. If we really love everybody we shall have no illwill towards any one. We shall have no enmity or hatred. Buddha preached that we should give love for hate. Gandhiji preached the same thing. We have to follow his footsteps if we are to be really useful in the world, and serve humanity with all love and in a selfless spirit. Mahatma Gandhi taught us how we can purify ourselves in order that God may make us His instruments to serve humanity. Selfless service alone counts. Any service done out of selfishness is of no value. Real value lies in doing things selflessly. Selflessness can come only when we have inner illumination. Through union with God we find light and joy within, and when we are thus illumined we can really serve others without expecting anything in return. When we are free within, our actions can never be selfish. So, to have illumination within and to act selflessly, we have to purify our mind.

TAKE GOD'S NAME CONSTANTLY

For purification of the mind, the easiest method, as Mahatma Gandhi and all other saints have taught us, is to repeat the holy name of God. God's name is all-powerful. By repeating the Name constantly we would become pure in heart, pure in actions and pure in thought. We must continuously and ceaselessly keep the remembrance of God in our heart. People may think how they can remember God when they are working in the world. It is quite possible. Our heart can be with God while our hands and feet are working in the world. Ramdas remembers, in this

connection, the words of Ramakrishna Paramahansa who says that we must work in the world with one hand and keep the other hand at the feet of the Lord firmly, and when our work is over, we must catch hold of His feet with both hands. So we can be in contact with Him and still work in the world, doing always the right thing and never going wrong, never trying to harm our fellow-beings, and never exploiting them. So the one way by which we can keep communion with God is to take His name constantly. Ramdas found for himself that there was no easier way for concentrating his mind upon God and getting the awareness of the Divine presence within and everywhere about him than the repetition of God's name.

This is the message he carries from place to place, because people say it is very difficult to meditate on God, to retire into solitude and go through severe austerities. It is very easy to take God's name. When you are free from work, even though for a short time, you can take God's name every day either sitting quiet in a place or moving about. If you practise this every day, you will be able to maintain the repetition even during your work, and that will lead you to continuous repetition. Your mind at once gets absorbed in the higher consciousness, when it has been stilled by proper purification through the repetition of God's name, and you get that universal vision which is essential for universal love and service. We shall become the true instruments in the hands of God for doing good to others in the real sense of the term.

DO NOT KILL OUT OF HATE

Q: How does non-vegetarian diet affect man's character?

Ramdas: From the experience Ramdas has gained by going over all countries of the world for the past three months, he finds that nearly 95 per cent of the population of the world are meat-eaters. As for Ramdas, he is not a meat-eater, but he does not condemn meat-eating. For those who are on the spiritual path and want to develop devotion for God, it is better that they do not eat meat, because meat is a Rajasic food.

Q: Are we not killing animals if we want to eat meat? And are we not responsible for the protection of the animals?

Ramdas: Are we not killing lives even if we eat pure vegetables? You must have heard of Dr. Bose who found by experiment that everything in the world has life. Even vegetables have life.

He demonstrated by an experiment that a plant manifested joy when a sugar solution was injected into it, just like a man who is eating sweets. When he injected a kind of poison, the plant immediately started showing signs of agony, as a man or animal would do before death, and gradually faded and died. So we see clearly that there is life in everything in the world and we cannot decide what to eat and what not to eat. It is difficult to draw a line of demarcation. We say we are the head of the creation. We must avoid massacring or killing out of hate. Animals kill other animals for the sake of food, but human beings range themselves against each other for waging wars out of hatred. If we stop these wars, there will be so much misery averted and so much happiness created in this world. We have in India the problem of cow protection. But if we go to the households of Hindus who profess to worship cows, we see how miserably they are kept. They are not taken proper care of. First let us look after the animals which are under our care and charge. In Europe and America people do not talk about vegetarianism. It may not be possible for them because they are used to non-vegetarian food. In Kashmir, you will find even Brahmins eating meat, because of cold weather, perhaps. We cannot have a hard and fast rule applicable to all people on this globe. It is a matter of habit, custom and need.

AT THE SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, SINGAPORE.

27th November, 1954.

HOMAGE TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Dear Friends,—After the inspiring speech of Swami Veetaso-kanandaji, Ramdas does not feel that he is fit enough to address you on religion. 'Religion' means 'rebinding ourselves to God.' We have been separated from Him and we should bind ourselves back to Him. But Ramdas is not going to dilate on this subject.

In the first place he feels extremely happy to find himself in this beautiful building which has been dedicated to Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Ramdas has been told that the donor of this building is Sri G. P. He has indeed done a great service to humanity in the name of Ramakrishna in making this donation for the construction of this building. Ramdas has to say also a few words about what he saw when he was taken round to see the work done in the school, dormitory, and other places here. The work is done wonderfully, in a selfless spirit, as dedication to God Himself. Friends who come here should offer more and more monetary help to make the work of the Mission a success in every respect, especially in serving the distressed, the needy and the orphans. It is not a centre merely for service, but it is a centre of spiritual knowledge as well. Here you get spiritual inspiration and guidance.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S INFLUENCE ON RAMDAS

It is in the fitness of things that, having come here, Ramdas should speak a few words about Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the great incarnation. All people look upon him as an incarnation. He was a veritable embodiment of Divinity. When Ramdas was young, attending school, he read the life and teachings of this great soul. From that time he had developed a fascination for this divine personality. The impression thus formed was silently working in him, and he was feeling that to live a life just like the dumb driven cattle was not the object of this life, and that we had to strive for the eternal verities of life so that we could evolve to a state of complete union with the Divine, who is at the basis of the manifestation before us. This impression took a deep root until it came to a climax in 1922. That year he was called upon

to leave everything for the sake of God and take to a wandering life.

° In the course of his wanderings God took him to Calcutta and from there he made his way to Dakshineswar. He reached Dakshineswar at night, and the next morning he was eager to see the room in which Ramakrishna lived. Fortunately a Sannyasi, who was present there, took Ramdas to the room, and as soon as he entered it, he felt inexpressible ecstasy. He could not stand it. He rolled on the floor, which had been blessed with the holy feet of Sri Ramakrishna. He was so much taken up with joy that he lost consciousness of the body and lay on the floor, still and calm, for some time, until he got up and left the place in an almost dazed condition. That was the first touch he got of the Mahatma. His presence was intensely felt when Ramdas entered the room. After that he was going from place to place, but that impression, that thrill he experienced at Dakshineswar, remained with him and remains with him even now, and when he thinks of that time he feels he is there. Even afterwards Ramdas visited Dakshineswar two or three times, and felt the same inner peace and calmness that he first felt. From what Ramdas has told you, you can form an idea what an inspiring personality Ramakrishna was. Ramakrishna is the Master of not only one, but of the whole world, of all those who want inspiration from him and surrender themselves to him in order to develop an inner personality which will take them to the highest state of God-realisation. He will guide you by the hand as the mother does her child. He is not an ordinary human being or Sadhu. He is a Divine incarnation. Ramdas looks upon him as such and he has taken this opportunity to pay his humble homage to him.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S GREATNESS

The most endearing trait in him was his childlike nature. "Unless you become like children you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." You should be childlike and spontaneous in everything you do. Ramakrishna was a child. It is rightly said that God is like a child. Ramakrishna was always simple, always overflowing with love and was giving himself away for others. God is all kindness, forgiveness and love. He is not merely the form that you see in the centre here. He is the all-pervading, eternal Reality, and to be one with that Reality you should approach through this great personality. Unless you have got a personal

expression to represent that Reality, you cannot reach the impersonal aspect of the same Godhead who is the Master of the universe. So every saint should be looked upon as the embodiment of Divinity and not as a mere human being bound down by time, space and causation. They are beyond all these things. They are the representatives of the universal Truth, the universal Reality and also expressions of That. It is said that the universal Spirit has condensed itself into human forms as saints and sages. We should look upon them as such. Then it is that we can get from them the right kind of spiritual help and inspiration. Ramdas looks upon this great Avatar, Ramakrishna, as such.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S WORK

Then again Ramdas cannot conclude the talk about Ramakrishna without making mention of his dearest and greatest disciple, Swami Vivekananda. When Swami Vivekananda went to America to address the Parliament of Religions, he virtually electrified the world. At that time Ramdas found that the message of Vedanta which Vivekananda delivered in America was accepted by the world. Our Upanishads (Vedanta) stand for the loftiest realisation of the Divine and you will find the same truth preached in all religions. Essentially, all religions say the same thing.

THE MESSAGE OF VEDANTA

But what is the character of Vedanta? Vedanta takes you to the highest goal and makes you know that you are God Himself. सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म — "Verily, all this universe is Brahman." This is the message of Vedanta. Of course, through Bhakti Yoga and through many other Yogas you reach the same Truth. But direct approach is taught by the Upanishads, which say, "You are He". You are not anything other than that supreme Spirit, which pervades everywhere and expresses itself as the universe before you. The sense of duality completely disappears in this state of Advaitic realisation.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA

The Bhagavad Gita preaches the three Yogas of Bhakti, Jnana and Karma. In that, Vedanta belongs to Bhakti Yoga, Sankhya

belongs to Jnana Yoga and Tantra belongs to Karma Yoga. Ramdas has divided the Bhagavad Gita into three. Vedanta is to realise everything as Brahman. To realise this supreme vision and experience, Jnana or Sankhya through meditation is necessary. You realise your oneness with Him as the impersonal Reality and based upon this knowledge of the Atman you see the whole universe as the expression of that Spirit. Even after that, as you will find in the 18th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, "सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज", there is yet another stage which is called the state of complete self-surrender. That surrender is the conclusive word of the Gita. Surrender is the way by which we can free ourselves completely from the ego-sense. The ego-sense possesses us and creates all sorts of complications. Therefore, when we are doing any action, we should know we are not the doers and the Divine within is the doer. It is by the power of the Divine that we are doing everything. Then only we can be free from the ego-sense. Everything happens by the power and will of God. If we realise this truth, we shall do everything in a spirit of spontaneity and enjoy bliss and peace. Jnana is all right when you are not active, but when you enter into activity you seem to be doing things by your own strength and power. Even this must disappear. That can go only when you surrender yourself to the Divine power everywhere.

HOW TO BECOME CHILDLIKE

This is the secret of the Sadhana performed by Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He was the child of the Divine Mother. The Divine Mother is the Divine Shakti responsible for all the manifestations and activities. That power is the one Deity to which we have to surrender ourselves completely and then free ourselves from the ego-sense. When we are free from the ego-sense, we shall become childlike. To be childlike is not to be childish. We must be entirely free from lust, greed and wrath, and from the pairs of opposites such as likes and dislikes. We must be pure in thought, word and deed. Our purity must be like that of crystal. The idea of sex must be transcended and we should see no difference between man and woman. This is possible only when we do not see diversity but perceive the whole world as the manifestation of the universal Spirit.

Then we are one with everybody. In that oneness all distinctions are lost. Then it is that we develop a childlike nature in

which we live always in bliss and peace. This is called *sahaja avastha*, or the normal state. Man is generally in an ignorant state which is his abnormal state. We have to regain that normality. That is possible only when we develop spiritual power, spiritual knowledge and spiritual vision. These are the things we have to develop until our ego-sense completely disappears and we become embodiments of Divinity. The Bhagavad Gita leads us to this vision and experience. So we must be one with the formless, all-pervading Truth through Jnana, and then behold the whole universe as the manifestation of that supreme Truth within us, and love all beings equally, because in that vision our love flows out to all alike, and lastly we must do everything in a state of surrender to the Divine power. In this way Bhakti, Jnana and Karma, must form the complete experience of spiritual life. The intellect, heart and body must work together. The dynamic and static aspects of God are together and we have to realise this which is called the Purushottama. We must live in this world doing all things as if we do not do anything.

SRI KRISHNA'S MESSAGE

This is the message Sri Krishna delivered to Arjuna on the battlefield, viz., to fight in the battlefield as if not fighting at all. We are doers and non-doers at the same time. As the all-pervading Truth or Brahman, we are not doing anything, but as Prakriti, the dynamic aspect of Truth, we are doing everything. This is the knowledge, experience and realisation of the three aspects of Divinity—dynamic, static, and that which is beyond dynamic and static. To reach this state of God-realisation, saints and Avatars like Sri Ramakrishna guide, inspire, and lead us.

Q: Was there any special reason for the change in your life in 1922?

Ramdas: The only reason was that God's grace came to him. Everything happens by His grace and if we know this we shall not have to search out for reasons for things that happen.

Q: What made you start on this world tour?

Ramdas: The previous answer is the answer to this question also. By God's will Ramdas started on the tour. By God's will he visited various places. By God's will he has come here and by God's will he is leaving this place for Kuala Lumpur tomorrow.

LET US FOLLOW HIS PLAN

Q: Is everybody's life predestined ?

Ramdas: God's ways are mysterious and we cannot understand what God is going to do the next moment. We should surrender ourselves to Him and never worry how He has planned our life. Otherwise, we are liable to speculate the wrong way and thereby hinder our own progress. Let Him do what He thinks best for us. We should be happy in whatever situation he places us.

Q: According to the Gita, God is the doer. He is the Master of the universe. People have tried to change the course of their lives. Actually some astrologers forecast what their life was going to be and they were determined to change the course of their life and it was possible for them to do so.

Ramdas: Perhaps God had planned it that way for them.

Q: So it is true that God has already planned everybody's life.

Ramdas: It is quite possible, but let us not try to understand it. Ours is only to follow the plan He has chalked out for us. We have been all along travelling round the world and between Hawaii and Wake Island we lost one day. Further, we have been turning our watches back every now and then. Let us not be caught in the changing time. Tomorrow would not be seen by anybody. Yesterday nobody saw. So these time factors are false. Let us try to transcend time and live in eternity. Because all these problems are related to time, let us not bother about them.

DVAITA AND ADVAITA ARE ONE

Q: Why should there be conflicts between the Dvaitic and Advaitic followers ?

Ramdas: There should not be. Dvaita and Advaita are only stages of progress in our spiritual evolution. We start with Dvaita, then we reach Visishtadvaita and then Advaita. We can be one with God, we can be separate from Him, and we can be in Him and He in us. All these aspects belong to the same kind of realisation and we need not see any contradiction among the three. A devotee, although one with God, wants to remain a devotee to praise Him, sing of Him, and be happy.

AT THE BUDDHIST UNION, SINGAPORE.

27th November, 1954.

LORD BUDDHA'S GUIDANCE

Dear friends, — Ramdas has nothing new to tell you about Lord Buddha. He was a Mahatma who is known all over the world, and it is said that he lived more than 500 years before the birth of Jesus. From that time his name and fame have been spreading in all parts of the world. Wherever we go, we hear of Buddha's greatness. He was a great teacher of humanity. Humanity is beholden to him for guiding it along the path of righteousness. This is the main object of his advent into the world. He taught by his own example how one should live one's life. He was a great prince. He renounced everything, went to the forest, performed severe austerities and at last realised the hollowness of this mundane life, and he taught that by detaching oneself from worldly aspirations one can go within oneself and find inner release in that state of Nirvana which grants us absolute freedom and peace. Ramdas is going to tell you what he wanted us to do in order to reach that state of perfect peace and liberation. He said that we should be pure in thought, word and deed. By leading such a pure life, we shall be able to achieve the final goal of liberation. Karma is at our back, because we are thinking that we do everything ourselves. The ego-sense is responsible for our bondage. The ego-sense must disappear and we must realise that we are not merely a bundle of senses and the physical body composed of the five elements, but are the supreme Reality behind all these apparent things. Then alone we can find release.

That state of release is undefinable, and therefore Buddha did not try to define it. Therefore he has stated, in the words of Edwin Arnold, "Do not dip the string of thought into the unfathomable. He who questions errs and he who answers errs." So he could not describe what that state is. In the Hindu philosophy also we have got a state described as Moksha, which means liberation. That state also is undefinable. We can define it only by negation and not by any positive assertion. It is a state of release from the bondage of the flesh and from the bondage of Karma and desires.

THE TEN EVILS

To attain that supreme state Lord Buddha had taught us to be pure in thought, word and deed. What is meant by purity in thought, word and deed? He said there are ten kinds of evil which we are prone to do in our life; three of the mind, four of the tongue and three of the body. Three of the mind are envy, wrath and scepticism, four of the tongue are lying, slander, gossiping and abusing, and three of the body are killing, stealing and adultery.

Lying: We must never tell lies but always speak the truth. Slander: Slander means talking ill of others. This is very common. We must see only the good qualities of others and praise them rather than pick out the faults and talk ill of them. If we think or talk ill of others, we shall increase the evil within us. If we think and talk well of others we shall decrease the evil within us and increase our good qualities. Gossiping: We are prone to use our time in useless talk. We must use our tongue only when necessary and that too for the right purpose. Abusing: Using bad words must be completely eschewed. We must never use the tongue for speaking ill of others, condemning or abusing others.

Killing: We are causing injury to others. This is called *Himsa*. Buddha's main preaching was: *Ahimsa paramo dharma* — meaning: 'non-injury to others is the highest Dharma.' Buddha's heart was filled with compassion. Soon after he got illumination, he found a lamb limping. He took it on his shoulders and carried it. He saw a bird falling down, hit by an arrow. He lifted it, fondled it and felt sorry for it. When you are filled with compassion, you do not feel like causing injury to anybody. Then comes stealing: We take others' property. Instead of stealing others' property you must give to others what you have, so that they may be satisfied with what you give. Even the wish to have something belonging to another amounts to stealing. Supposing a man has got something with him and you wish to have it. It means that you have committed the theft. Mere feeling is enough to make you a thief. So to that extent our mind must be pure. Adultery: One must be faithful to one's wife and look upon all other women as one's mothers. This is for those who are leading a family life. But those who are monks and have renounced everything for the sake of the Dharma preached by Buddha or other saints and have dedicated their lives to the service of

humanity, should never look upon any woman with a lustful eye. They must look upon woman as their own mother. This must be the attitude. This is called Brahmacharya.

NIRVANA

When we become perfectly pure in thought, word and deed, and in that state of purity sit for meditation, our mind dissolves itself within a short time and we go deep down and realise that we are the supreme, all-pervading, static Spirit. This is the state of Nirvana which is reached by transcending all planes of life. According to Hinduism five Kosas are mentioned. In Buddhism you find five stages of meditation until you go into the state of Nirvana and feel that you are an illumined soul.

THE PERFECT YOGA

Now Ramdas will tell you something about Yoga. Yoga means union. It is the joining of the soul with the Oversoul, the individual soul with the universal Soul. Yoga must mean the mind's disappearance and the realisation of the ultimate Reality which you are. It is only a disappearance of the screen between you and the Reality. As soon as it is removed, you feel you are one with the Reality. There was no duality at all. It was a misconception or illusion. You must free yourselves from the illusion. In fact, Reality is the only thing that exists and all the other things that appear to be existing will pass away, as they are impermanent. Edwin Arnold uses a beautiful phrase in translating the teachings of Buddha: "The dew drop slips into the shining sea and becomes the sea itself." So the individual self merges in the universal Self and becomes the universal Self itself.

Yoga, as described in the Bhagavad Gita, is of three kinds. They are Bhakti, Jnana and Karma. In fact they are not three different Yogas but three aspects of one Yoga, because Bhakti Yoga relates to the heart, Jnana Yoga relates to the intellect and Karma Yoga relates to the body. Jnana Yoga is the one which is predominantly preached by the Buddhist faith, but it is accompanied also by Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti Yoga is not Bhakti or devotion given to a personal ideal but devotion to the whole humanity. What Buddha did was to love and serve everybody. Buddhist Bhikkus have dedicated their lives to the attainment of this Dharma.

Those who have taken refuge in these three Yogas are the lovers of humanity. When they see suffering anywhere they rush there and see that relief is given to the sufferers. That means that their intellect is full of wisdom and their heart is filled with love. So when our actions are done for the relief of the distressed in the world, with our heart overflowing with love for all beings, and our intellect established in a state of static, calm silence, we realise that we are one with the universal Spirit which is the basis of this manifestation.

So Yoga is a way of approach to the Divine realisation, which is complete and in which we find eternal wisdom, infinite love and infinite power working through us for the good of humanity. So our body, in all its being, inside and outside, must be a comprehensive vehicle through which God's power, love and wisdom are revealed in completeness and perfection. This is the purpose of life. This is what Buddha, Krishna, Jesus and all the other great teachers of the world have been teaching us. This is not a partial realisation. This is the all-inclusive realisation in which all parts of our body are used for the complete elimination of the ego-sense and desires, and for attaining a state of beatitude which is without name, form, denomination, beginning or end, and which is simply indescribable.

PRE-REQUISITE FOR MEDITATION

Some people sit for meditation and think that they are meditating on the Reality. But when they are active in the world, their actions do not bear out that they are seeking the Truth. Their actions cause more evil to others than good and yet they call themselves devotees of Truth. They cannot concentrate their mind. They may sit silently for meditation, but their body alone is seated there, while their mind is roaming about here and there. This is because their mind is not pure. To purify the mind, as Ramdas found, the best way is to repeat the name of God. That helped him to concentrate his mind on God. All actions must be done in a selfless spirit and that will help to purify the mind. When the mind has attained absolute purity, the mind as such disappears. It is not mind then. It is pure consciousness. It is then that we go within ourselves and sit in silent ecstasy and peace.

For the followers of Buddha, Ramdas would say, Buddha's name alone would do to purify their mind, because they cherish,

through the name, Buddha's great ideal. That ideal will surely reveal itself in their heart and destroy all the darkness and desires of all kinds in the mind, making it perfectly pure. Ramdas can tell you in this connection, that he was a great admirer of Buddha. His ideals were Buddha, Krishna and Christ. He used to carry with him, during his first wandering life, the three books, The Light of Asia, the Bhagavad Gita and the New Testament. These three books inspired him all through and kept him always on the path and never allowed him to go astray. He felt safe on the path by the guidance of these great teachers.

VISIONS EXPERIENCED BY RAMDAS

Now Ramdas will tell you that he had also the visions of these three great teachers. This is strange. Ramdas never wanted Krishna, Christ or Buddha to come to him in any form, but still they appeared before him. In a cave, where he was sitting in Mangalore, he had the vision of Buddha. Buddha's face appeared before him, calm, serene, and in a state of meditation. His eyes were closed and in that serene face he saw the light and peace which haunted him for days and days together. Even now when he thinks of the vision, that face comes before his mental eyes. Again Ramdas had the vision of Christ in a cave in the Himalayas. He was undergoing a fast for five days, living only on water, and had absolutely no sleep. The whole night he was sitting in meditation, taking God's holy name. At that time, Christ's figure came before him. The first vision Ramdas had was that of Krishna, before he was made to renounce everything and go as a mendicant all over India. In 1923 it was that Krishna came to him and danced before him. At that time Ramdas prayed that he did not want to have such visions. He wanted to see Krishna in everything and not in one particular form, as that would bring him pain and sorrow when that form disappeared.

In response to his prayer he was taken to a place where he met a great saint, Ramana Maharshi. After that he went up the hill of Arunachala and remained in a cave for 21 days under strict discipline. When he came out one morning, he could see only light everywhere, and he found the Lord had fulfilled his wish. He was mad of God in those days, and this vision gave him supreme ecstasy. He went about embracing anything and everything he saw, even the rocks and trees. To hate anybody is impossible for one who is gifted with the vision of God every-

where, because he sees oneness everywhere. He does not see any difference between himself and others. Therefore he is made to love everybody without hate. Hate has no place in the life dedicated to God, and by such dedication one realises the presence of Divinity everywhere.

When you have attained this blessed vision, you will rise to the exalted state in which there is no sorrow or desire of any kind. Where is the place for desires there? You are enjoying bliss all the 24 hours, without any effort to maintain it. This is what is called the Buddhahood, a state of liberation in which there is no sense of duality. So Ramdas was a child of these great spiritual masters of the world, and by their guidance and grace he grew up, and he is sitting before you to tell you that Buddha is his ideal, Buddha is his master, just as Krishna and Christ are. Buddha had played a prominent part in Ramdas' life. So today Ramdas has spoken about Buddha and the Yogas described in the Bhagavad Gita.

So let us all be grateful to that great Avatar, Buddha, who came to the world for the redemption of mankind, and may his grace ever pour on us and ever shine in our hearts and may his blessings be ever upon us.

AT THE VIVEKANANDA ASHRAM, KUALA LAMPUR.

28th November, 1954.

HOW TO REALISE GOD

Beloved Friends, — Ramdas never expected he will have to address you on this occasion because we have only just arrived here from Singapore. It is a joy to meet you all in this hall in the building which is erected in the sacred and holy memory of Swami Vivekananda. The chief object of human life, you all know, is to realise God. What we have to do to realise God is that we must be devoted to Him in thought, word and deed. Our mind must constantly think of Him, our tongue must constantly chant His holy name, and our actions must be done in a spirit of dedication to Him. In this way it is that we shall be able to attain perfect purity in thought, word and deed, which is essential for God-realisation. This is the summum bonum of human life. To achieve this goal is the most important thing in our life. If we run after the pleasures of the senses, we know fully well that we do not gain that joy and peace which the soul hungers for. Therefore the fulfilment of human life lies in the attainment of eternal happiness and peace which can be had only through realisation of God who is, as our great saints and sages say, "Satchidananda" — absolute existence, consciousness and bliss. This great Truth, this great Spirit or this great God is ever dwelling in our hearts, in the heart of everyone of us. We need not go in search of him to far off places. He is in us and everywhere about us. If we become conscious of this by constant remembrance, by constant meditation and constant thinking of Him, we will realise Him.

As a man thinketh so he becometh. At present we are fully absorbed in worldly activities and are in pursuit of the perishable things of the world. By so doing we shall never be able to feel His presence with us. From time to time we must withdraw our mind from the external activities and commune with the Divine within us, and by such practice, in course of time, realise His presence everywhere about us. To see Him everywhere is the object of this great aspiration or effort. God is not far away from us. This is what we have to believe before we embark on the path of God-realisation. It is no doubt difficult, but at the same time it is easy because we have to get nothing from outside.

We have got it already with us. He is with us and He is our real being. We have only to become conscious of Him, aware of Him. For that we must be true to Him in everything we do, and that is the only way by which we can approach Him and make our life blessed. ²

AT THE VIVEKANANDA ASHRAM, KUALA LAMPUR.

28th November, 1954.

Under the auspices of the Divine Life Society, Kuala Lumpur.

SWAMI SIVANANDA

Dear friends, — The function that is being held now is on behalf of the Divine Life Society, Kuala Lumpur, started here in the name of Sri Sivananda Saraswati of Rishikesh. The Divine Life Society has branches in many parts of India, Europe and other countries. Swami Sivananda is a great Mahatma who is spreading his spiritual power all over the world in order to awaken the hearts of people to the real meaning of life and awareness of God. We have heard that he has written many books in order that people, by reading them, may be enlightened. He also publishes several journals which go to every corner of India and abroad, and people are immensely benefited by reading them.

Before we started on this world tour, we wrote to Swami Sivananda for his blessings, and he was gracious enough to send his blessings for the success of the world tour. By his grace and blessings and also by the grace and blessings of many other saints of India, we have been successfully carrying out the task which God has entrusted to us, namely, the propagation of the ideal of universal love and service. Swami Sivananda has dedicated his life to the service of humanity. All great Vibhutis of God are in the world in order to awaken people to the awareness of God and to bring them closer to God and enable them ultimately to realise Him. Therefore their lives are dedicated to the service of humanity and they do not spare themselves in this task.

In the course of our tour, it is a joy to us to be in your midst today and to talk to you on the divine mission with which we started from India. The chief object of human life, as we have been told by all sages and saints in all parts of the world, is to realise God and to attain that state of perfect bliss and peace which our soul hungers and thirsts for. People belonging to various cults, creeds, religions and sects, are all striving their utmost to realise this goal, to reach this supreme end and aim of life.

GLORY OF JAPA YAJNA

° Now Ramdas will tell you what should be the essence of our endeavour to realise this goal. Sadhanas or disciplines, Pujas and Tapascharyas are all done with the sole object of keeping our mind continuously in the remembrance of God. Now the most easy way to teach the mind to be in communion with God is to chant or repeat continuously His holy, glorious and all-powerful name. The repetition of God's name is an all-powerful Sadhana by itself. It includes every other Sadhana, because it brings us in contact with God. Some saints have declared that by repeating the holy name of God you are performing a Yajna at every step.

In the Bhagavad Gita it is said that of all the Yajnas the highest is Japa Yajna. Saints in different parts of India, be it Western India, Southern India, Northern India or Eastern India, are all telling us to sing the name of God continuously, and by such singing and repetition to attain God-realisation. The repetition of God's name in order to commune with God is easy, because you can repeat it at all times, in all places, while for other Sadhanas you must have a particular place, a particular time, and other restrictions. By continuous repetition of God's name you can have a ceaseless, peaceful remembrance of Him, as Name and God are not different. It is said that he who has God's name always on his lips is a Jivanmukta, because by continuous repetition of the Name his ego-sense is dissolved and he becomes conscious of God within and later on feels complete identity with Him.

Before we are prompted from within to repeat the holy name of God, one thing is absolutely necessary, and that is the company of saints. Our devotion for God increases in the company of saints. Therefore two things are essential in life in order that we may progress in the spiritual path, and these are the society of saints and constant repetition of God's name. What joy was welling up in the hearts of you all when you were singing now the sweet name of God! God's name is very sweet and the sound of the Name is just nectar to the ear. When the mind is absorbed in the enthralling sound of God's name, it refuses to wander. Just as the bee, while drinking honey from the flower, gets absorbed in it, the mind gets absorbed in the sweet name of God.

Besides what Ramdas told you so far about the greatness of the Name, Ramdas will also finally tell you that if you have faith

in the Name and take the Name constantly, this Name is capable of taking you to the final spiritual experience, highest spiritual perfection, vision and realisation. The Name grants you not only the knowledge of the Atman, but also the vision of the universal Spirit manifest in the entire universe. You will realise, therefore, the all-inclusive, all-transcendent and complete Divine being in all His aspects. Therefore Ramdas' appeal to you all is to have on your lips the glorious name of God continuously, whatever the Name may be, whether Shiva, Rama, Krishna, or any other Name which you hold dear; and you will see what marvellous effect it produces in your heart, how it frees you from lust, greed and wrath, and grants you the knowledge of the real Self and gives you the experience of immortal bliss and peace.

AT THE VIVEKANANDA ASHRAM, KUALA LAMPUR.
28th November, 1954.

GRACE OF MOTHER DIVINE

For the sake of the mothers who have assembled here, Ramdas is going to say a few words. In the first place they must take him to be a child of theirs.

Ramdas is your child. He is going to speak to you about Divine grace. Divine grace comes to us through the Divine Mother. When the Mother is kind to us, She gives us the benefit of the Darshan of the Father. Ramdas will give you an instance from the Ramayana. We have read that when Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were going along a narrow path in the forest, one after the other in a line, Lakshmana could not have the Darshan of Rama for a very long time, as Sita was in the middle. Lakshmana prayed to the Mother to stand aside a little, so that he could have Darshan of Rama. She then stepped aside and allowed Lakshmana to have Darshan of Rama. So, by the grace of the Divine Mother, the veil of Maya that stands between us and the Supreme Lord can be removed. Therefore we must propitiate the Mother first before we can have the vision of God.

The Divine Mother is the mother of the entire universe. She is the very personification of divine Shakti. To surrender ourselves to the Divine Mother is to recognise that by Her will and power all things happen in the world. It is by Her power that we talk, walk and do everything. Every movement that takes place in the universe, all actions and activities, are born of Her power. When we realise this truth, our ego-sense automatically disappears, the I-ness vanishes and we realise the Shiva aspect of the Divine, who is the all-pervading, static Brahman. Then we have a right to say 'Sivoham', 'Sivoham', 'Chidanandarupa Sivoham Sivoham'. This divine revelation comes to us through the grace of the Mother. Therefore, what we have to do is to become Her children and behold the whole universe as Her manifestation. In fact, everything that has name and form is Her name and form.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE MOTHER

You know from the life of Sri Ramakrishna that he was an ardent and a very faithful and devoted son of the Divine Mother.

He was able to see the Divine Mother everywhere, in all beings, creatures and things, in the last days of his life. It is this grand vision of the Divine Mother everywhere that liberates us from the thralldom of the individual self and the cycle of birth and death. In this connection, Ramdas will give you an illustration of how we have to behold the whole universe as the manifestation of the Mother.

SAINT MIRA BAI

You have heard of Mira Bai, the famous saint of Mewar. One day she wished to have Darshan of a Mahatma, and went to the place where he lived. When she neared the hut, she was told by one of his disciples that the Mahatma was not prepared to see her as she was a woman and he was a Purusha (man). Then Mira sent word back, "I have known of only one Purusha, and He is Krishna. All the rest in the world are women. Since I hear that there is another Purusha here, I would very much like to see him." As soon as the message was conveyed to the Mahatma, he came out and fell at the feet of Mira Bai asking her pardon. So, in fact, although outwardly we appear like men and women, virtually we are the expressions and manifestations of the Mother.

THE OLD WOMAN AT PANDHARPUR

Ramdas will give you another instance. Many years ago when we went to Pandharpur, a place of pilgrimage in India, we had no idea where we could stay for the night. We reached the place late in the evening, and when we entered the city, met a very old woman. She was holding a stick in her hand and was a bent figure. We went to her and asked where we could find a suitable place for rest that night. She replied, "Mother, I shall show you the way to a Dharmasala." We all followed her. As we were walking in the street, she went on talking about the glory of the Divine Mother. She was saying that the Mother has become the stars, the sun, moon, all men and women, and all things and objects everywhere in the world, and She is present everywhere and in everything. This was the universal vision of the Mother, which the old woman had. When we passed a temple in which there was the image of Rukmani, the old woman at once fell prostrate in the street before the image. Her vision

was indeed wonderful. She was seeing the Mother everywhere and was talking, behaving and doing everything like a child. So we have to become the children of the Divine Mother and, through Her grace, have the vision, Darshan and realisation of God.

AT THE VIVEKANANDA TAMIL SCHOOL, KUALA LAMPUR.
28th November, 1954.

SUPREMACY OF THE SPIRITUAL GOAL

Beloved Friends,— To Ramdas, you are the very embodiments of his eternal Beloved, the Lord of the universe. This vision was granted to him by the compassionate Lord several years ago, and from that time he sees his supreme Beloved in whatever direction he turns; and on whomsoever his eyes fall, he beholds that person or object as the very manifestation of that supreme Reality. So Ramdas' present position, as he may explain to you, is that he is a simple, trusting, and dedicated child of God. As a humble servant of the Lord, as Ramdas' name suggests, he has been, from the time God accepted him, going all over India, conveying the message of the Divine name to all people who would assemble to hear his words. Ramdas has been telling all the friends he met at several places about the supremacy of the spiritual goal over every other goal in the world.

BHAKTI LEADS TO JNANA

If you deeply ponder over your problems of life, which you have to face every day, you will know that real happiness can be had only through communion, union, and oneness with God. From the experience which Ramdas gained through the grace of God, he found that the constant chanting of God's name is the easiest way of approach to that supreme Spirit dwelling in the hearts of everyone of us. The first thing necessary for us is a keen aspiration to realise the Divine. This aspiration will enable us to constantly remember God. Because, where our love, our aspiration, or our ultimate wish is, there our mind is. So if we have a real desire to realise God, our mind will be filled with His remembrance. Remembrance of God itself gives us the taste of our union with Him and that taste is the sweetness of the immortal bliss and peace. Therefore it behoves us to have one-pointed devotion for God and constant remembrance of Him.

By constant thinking and remembrance of God through utter devotion, we shall have our minds thoroughly purged of all low desires belonging to our lower nature. So the repetition of God's name and the constant remembrance of God bring us purity of

thought, word and deed. This experience will lead us to perfect stillness of the mind and in this stillness we become aware of the Divine presence within us and everywhere outside us. This means the realisation of the Supreme Self, the all-pervading Brahman, the all-pervading Reality. So Bhakti, in the earlier stage, leads us to Jnana. Jnana is the realisation of the Atman, who is the all-pervading, eternal, static, immortal Spirit. Jnana is not altogether the ultimate state of spiritual evolution.

SAMA DARSHAN

There is a stage that comes to us after Jnana, and that is called Parabhakti. In Parabhakti we get the vision of God everywhere. We see the whole universe as the manifestation of the divine Spirit which we have realised within ourselves. There is an expression in the Upanishads, सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म — "Verily, the whole universe is Brahman". In the Bhagavad Gita also the same idea has been expressed in the words uttered by Lord Krishna, वासुदेवः सर्वमिति — "Everything is Vasudeva." It is not that we have only to realise the static, all-pervading Brahman, but we have also to see the manifestation as the expression of Brahman. God is at once static and dynamic. He is formless and also with form. So, universal vision is the result of Jnana. In this universal vision all distinctions are lost. All human beings stand transformed before you as the very embodiments of God. In this state you will have risen above the Dwandwas and the three Gunas.

In the Bhagavad Gita this state has been described as 'Sama Darshan'. In this state you will not have the least trace of egoism in you. You will feel you are one with all existence, with all beings and with all creatures in the universe. You belong now not to any society, to any country, religion, caste, creed, or colour. You become the lover of the entire humanity. The whole humanity is nothing but a manifestation of God for you. Having told you what we have to attain in this life, Ramdas is now going to explain to you the purpose for which God made him start on this world tour.

RAMDAS' MISSION

About three and a half months ago, God gave him the command to leave India on this world tour. The object was to

propagate the ideal of universal love and service. As it is, we find the world is rent with strife. There is much distraction and discord and there are chances of an impending war. You find acute differences among people belonging to different religions. We have forgotten that as human beings we are the children of one God, who is the God of all nations, all creeds, and all religions. If we recognise this, there will not be any room for dissension and war in the world. Therefore it behoves us to go deep down within ourselves and find the true basis of world harmony and peace. That basis is the universal Spirit whom we call God. Therefore we should devote every day some time exclusively to meditate, to remember and pray to this divine Spirit within us, so that by His grace our life may become free from lust, greed and wrath and thereby we can produce an atmosphere of goodwill in the world.

LET US FIRST ELEVATE OURSELVES

By attaining the universal vision, which Ramdas has a little while ago described, it is not that we are doing good to others, but we are elevating ourselves to a state of immortal bliss and peace which we are in search of. It is by having such a vision that we gain for ourselves real peace and happiness, and we also impart that joy and peace to others with whom we come daily in contact. We shall thus be contributing our share to the achievement of universal peace, goodwill and harmony. God is not different from us. We are ever one with Him. But since we have forgotten Him, we feel a sense of separation from Him. So our task here is to abolish or to eliminate that sense of separation between us and God, and live a life by which we can become His instruments for doing good in the world, for the welfare of the world, for the uplift of the world, as willed by Him.

God is not to be attained but only to be realised. In the Upanishads there is a Mahavakya, अहं ब्रह्मास्मि — "I am Brahman". This shows that we are verily He. We have forgotten Him. Some veil has come before us which makes us oblivious of Him, and so we do not know that we are one with Him. In Christianity you will find that Jesus Christ has categorically said that the kingdom of heaven is within us, and that in that kingdom God resides. Ramdas is reminded also of another expression in the Bible: "Be still and know I am God". This means that we must keep our mind still and realise that we and God are one. We are

having this experience every day when we are singing God's name in chorus or alone. We find then that the mind which was running here and there gets still, as it is bathed in a strange, and so far unexperienced, peace and bliss. In that state we are filled with divine bliss and peace, and we find no distinction between us and our fellow-beings, between us and the Divine to whom we are devoted, and whose name we are chanting.

Ramdas' visit to the various countries of the world was with the mission of bringing into the hearts of people whom he met, the desire to attain to that perfect peace within and without. If you are free, through the constant meditation and remembrance of God, from desires belonging to your lower nature, you will be able to practise universal love and service. There is high tension now in the whole world. In several parts of the world, we see people are seized with an unseen fear of some great catastrophe befalling them. In this condition it behoves everyone of us to tune our mind with the Almighty God and by His grace see that no such catastrophe befalls humanity.

TEST OF TRUE DEVOTION

All distinctions among us must be dissolved, because we are all children of one God. This we should never forget when we deal with each other. Unity means strength. Strength must be achieved not for harming one another, but for helping each other and to bring about peace and harmony among all people in the world. If we are true devotees of God, we must love all beings, because God dwells in all beings. The Lord says that that devotee is dear to Him who loves Him in all beings and creatures. When a man says he loves God and does not love his fellow-beings, he is a liar.

The test of our love for God is that we should love our fellow-beings, be kind to them, forgiving towards them, tolerant towards them. Our heart must go out in love towards those who are in distress, suffering and trouble. Here we should not make any distinction. There are some people who give help only to the people of the community, caste, or country to which they belong. But love must flow out towards everybody alike. Because our Atman, the Supreme Spirit, is the same in all beings of the world. If we narrow our vision and love only certain communities or certain classes of people, then we are not really loving in spirit but only through mental or physical affinity.

This is the great message which we have received from our spiritual masters, teachers and Avatars of the world.

Unless our vision is universalised, unless our life mingles with the life divine, we cannot be free from the ego-sense, we cannot attain that liberation, Moksha or Nirvana which we hunger for. God-realisation not merely frees us from rebirth or transmigration, but also grants us, here and now, the enjoyment of eternal bliss and peace. When we are enjoying this bliss, we will find that the pleasures of the senses are absolutely nothing. A person in pursuit of these pleasures will then be like one craving for gutter water when he has been drinking divine nectar itself. Ramdas speaks to you from his own experience, which God in His grace has granted him. He has been experiencing this divine bliss for about 30 years now, without any break. For the last 20 years or so, Ramdas has not been doing any Sadhana, because Sadhana has ceased. The person who was doing this Sadhana is no more. He cannot or could not have sat before you to speak about God or universal vision, or Brahman, unless God had given him the authority to do so.

RAMDAS' ADVICE

The joy that you get by realising the Divine within you, by realising your identity and oneness with God, is so unsurpassing that when he sees people rushing after pleasures of the senses, he wonders how such people could be pursuing the shadows, leaving the substance behind. Everyone of you is the very embodiment of Divinity. Your true being is *Sat-chit-ananda* — absolute Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. You have forgotten this truth. Therefore, remember it by taking the holy, powerful name of the Reality, until your mind disappears and you stand revealed as the Truth itself and enjoy, as Ramdas has been enjoying, that infinite bliss which is inexhaustible. It is eternal beyond time, space and causation. That Reality is yourself.

May you all enjoy that bliss and peace by taking your mind inward and by losing it in that infinite ocean of bliss and peace! The bliss which Ramdas is enjoying now is due to the power of God's sweet and holy name. By repeating constantly the holy Name our mind becomes still and the latent joy within us fills us through and through and those who are coming near us are elevated. They also get that joy. When we are filled with this bliss, we cannot but love all alike. We cannot but see the Divine

everywhere. The whole universe will be for us, then, the veritable image of our eternal Beloved, whom we have found within ourselves.

AT THE SUDDHA SAMAJ, KUALA LAMPUR.

29th November, 1954.

ONE GOAL FOR ALL RELIGIONS

Dear Friends, — We are extremely delighted to find ourselves in this Ashram which radiates love and peace. We find that here is a common platform for the meeting of devotees of all the religions of the world. This is a happy sight and we observe that this meeting is held in a spirit of brotherhood based upon the acceptance of one God as the God of all religions. Although the great spiritual Masters who came to redeem mankind from sin and error have chalked out particular paths for reaching God, it is understood that ultimately we have to reach the same God who is the God of all peoples in the world. We have four principal religions in the world. They are Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Christianity is founded, rather established, around the great personality of Jesus Christ. Islam is the basis or foundation of the teachings of the great prophet, Mohammed. Buddhism is based upon the teachings of Buddha. In Hinduism there are many great spiritual teachers who have been guiding the people towards the realisation of God. Then again we have Guru Nanak, the great saint of the Punjab, who has founded Sikhism. All of them guide their followers to the same goal. If we do not forget this, we shall live together in perfect amity, friendliness and harmony. That we can live in perfect harmony is evident now at this place, and Ramdas is supremely happy to see this. 'Religion' means 'binding back to God'. We have strayed away from Him and we have to go back to Him. We are all children of one father and mother, who is God. The war clouds are there because we do not see among ourselves the unity based on our spiritual kinship.

PRAY FOR UNITY AND PEACE

In our tour round the world, we have been observing how people are obsessed everywhere by the feeling that there is going to be another war. But in several places we visited, we found, whatever the religion they belonged to, they crowded together in their spiritual centres to pray to God to avert another war. The united efforts of us all should be utilised to pray to God with one

voice. We shall then be releasing a force which will produce peace and harmony. God's grace is necessary for us particularly at this time. It is therefore important that, whatever the country or race to which we may belong, we must unite ourselves, love one another, and produce an atmosphere of goodwill and peace in the world based upon the oneness of the Divine Spirit that pervades everywhere and controls all things. Let us pray that God, in all His mercy and compassion, may create in our hearts love for Him, faith in Him and absolute devotion for Him. We can thus get rid of our impurities and our animal nature and raise ourselves to the divine nature, so that we can see God, feel His presence everywhere and live and act in the experience of that realisation. Only by doing so we can bring real peace in the world.

The most important thing is that we should love each other. Christ says, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Mohammed says, "We should create a brotherhood among ourselves." Krishna says, "We should behold the Divine everywhere and love all beings as our own self." Buddha says, "Give love for hate." Guru Nanak says, "Keep the name of God constantly, so that your mind will be pure and you can love all beings alike." That is the message of all great teachers of the world. They all want us to love one another and live in harmony. This is the time when we need many more centres of this type, so that our hearts may go to the one omnipotent Being whose grace alone can bring peace and goodwill in the world, and dispel the clouds of darkness hanging over us.

AT THE MAHAMARIAMMAN TEMPLE, KUALA LAMPUR.
29th November, 1954.

SURRENDER TO DIVINE MOTHER

Beloved Embodiments of Divinity, — We have gathered here tonight in the temple of the Divine Mother, under Her benign protection and grace. Let us, from this moment onwards, feel that we are all children of the Divine Mother, and thus sink all our differences and love one another in the light of this knowledge. It is by loving one another that we can achieve the Divine vision — see the Mother in the entire universe. As it is, we are caught up in the toils of *Apara Prakriti* (lower Nature), as a result of which we are obsessed by differences and suffer in many ways. Therefore, it is necessary that we should rise above our lower nature by surrendering ourselves to the *Para Prakriti* (higher Nature), the Divine Mother. The Divine Mother is the all-pervading, eternal, dynamic principle — Para Shakti. By the grace of this Divine Mother it is that the soul is liberated from ignorance and gets the vision of Shiva or Brahman. In fact Shiva and Shakti are not different, just as the sun and his light. It is rightly said that Shiva and Shakti are the two aspects of the same ultimate Godhead, who is called Paramashiva. If we really wish to free ourselves from the bondage of ignorance, from the obsession of the ego-sense, there is no other way for us than to surrender ourselves completely to the Divine Mother and rise above the lower nature into our higher nature, and live always in a state of perfect union with the Mother and with Shiva who is the substratum of the *lila* played by the Mother as the universe.

GURU ALONE LIBERATES

Ramdas, who is sitting before you, is a child of the Divine Mother. He is blessed with the vision of the Divine everywhere, through the grace of great saints. Ramdas' object in talking to you is to tell you what Divine grace is and how such grace can come to us and liberate us from ignorance. Men struggle hard to purify their mind and turn it towards God. But they are unable to do so in spite of their strenuous efforts. What they have to do, in the first place, is to aspire for God. If they really wish to see God, they must contact a saint, a realised soul. God — the

universal Spirit, the universal Power and the universal Principle — does not shower on us His grace directly. He does so through saints. Saints are the very embodiments of the Divine Shakti. So it has been accepted on all hands, that Guru is the manifestation of God. °Even Rama, Krishna and other great Avatars had their own Gurus. It is the Guru alone who can grant us Moksha or liberation. If we appeal to God, He appears to us in the form of a Guru in order to grant us Divine grace and the highest vision and experience. How the Guru liberates, purifies, and grants the highest beatitude to the worst of men is something wonderful. Ramdas will give you three instances.

STORY OF VALMIKI

You all know the great sage, Valmiki. He was a robber, who was attacking passersby, killing and looting them for the maintenance of his family. In this way he was committing crime after crime for a long time. What was it that turned his mind entirely towards God and ultimately enabled him to realise God and become a Rishi? It was the grace of a saint. Devarishi Narada was once passing through the same way, where many people had been attacked by this robber before. The robber approached him and was about to attack him with the object of robbing him of his musical instruments. Then Narada questioned him what his purpose was in committing such crimes. Valmiki replied that he was doing all that for the maintenance of his family. In the world many people are giving the same excuse for leading a dishonest life. The advice, which Narada at that time gave to Valmiki, applies to everyone who leads a dishonest life. Narada told Valmiki that he would have to suffer for all the crimes he committed. Valmiki protested that he was not committing any crime, as he was acting solely for the support of his family, and that, if at all it was a sin, a share of it would also go to the members of his family, who were benefited by his robbery. Then Narada asked him to go to his wife and children and ask if they were prepared to share his sin. The robber went and questioned his wife and children. All of them replied that they were not prepared to share his sin and that he alone had to suffer for it. They also told him that they were only to enjoy what °wealth he brought for them. As soon as Valmiki heard this, his eyes were opened, and without losing any time, he rushed back to Narada and prayed to him to save him

from this predicament. Then Narada gave him the Rama Mantra and asked him to repeat it constantly. He could not repeat the Mantra properly. Instead of saying 'Rama', 'Rama', he could only say 'Mara'. 'Mara'. However, even by repeating 'Mara', 'Mara', which automatically became 'Ramā', 'Rama', the Ramnam came to his lips and it went on ceaselessly. It transformed his whole life. He beheld Rama within his heart and everywhere about him, and became a great sage. This was all by the grace of Narada. This is only one instance.

NITYANANDA AND TWO RUFFIANS

You must have heard of the life of Lord Gouranga, the famous saint of Bengal. During his time there were two ruffians. It was the custom of Lord Gouranga to sing the name of God in ecstasy and walk in the streets followed by his disciples. These ruffians, who had no love for saints and had no faith in God, were in all manner of ways harassing Gouranga and his followers, when they were passing through the streets in procession. On one occasion, one of them flung a sharp stone which hit Gouranga's disciple, Nityananda. It hit him on his forehead and blood gushed out. Nityananda knew from whom the stone came, and he rushed straight towards him and gave him a warm embrace with all love and affection, and also told him with folded hands, "Oh my brother, I am not angry that you have hit me with a stone, but I appeal to you to take the name of Govinda at least once." These two ruffians were stunned to see the humility, love and affection of the saint, and they at once fell at his feet begging for pardon. From that time they gave up their evil ways and joined the Bhajan party and began to sing God's name and dance in the company of the devotees. Later on they became famous as great devotees of Lord Krishna.

THE STORY OF ST. PAUL

Ramdas will give yet another instance to show how, by the grace of a saint, a person who was given to bad ways was saved and became a great devotee of God. This happened during the time of Jesus Christ. You must have heard of the life of St. Paul. Jesus Christ was going from place to place preaching about the glory of God and the greatness of praying to Him and realising Him. To listen to his preachings thousands of people assembled.

Wherever he went, this St. Paul, whose name at that time was Saul, also used to go with his rowdy friends to create disturbance and hinder the good work. On one occasion, when he heard that Jesus was delivering a discourse at some place three miles away from where Saul was staying, he took some rowdies and proceeded in that direction. On his way, he suddenly heard a voice, "Saul, why dost thou persecuteth Me?" Saul knew that it was the voice of Jesus. Suddenly a flash struck his eyes and he fell down unconscious. When he got up from that place, lifted up by his friends, he found he had gone blind. For nearly three or four hours he was stark blind. But what happened when he was undergoing this experience? His heart was completely changed. He became a great devotee and a disciple of Jesus. As soon as he dedicated his life to his spiritual master, his sight was restored. Soon he left his home and country and went into solitude for three years, which he spent in prayers and meditation. He returned from there a completely changed man, filled with divine peace and radiance. Thereafter he was known as St. Paul.

RAMDAS' TRANSFORMATION

Ramdas has given you these three instances, but these are not the only three. There are many more. All saints and sages are telling us with one voice that they got illumination only after they first got a distinct turn of mind towards God by the contact of saints. When Ramdas was in Singapore two days ago and was asked to speak in the Ramakrishna Mission, a mother from the audience asked him how Ramdas' life was suddenly changed 33 years ago. Was it due to his previous Karma or effort? Ramdas gave her a simple reply that the change came to him only through Divine Grace.

Grace is the only thing which can turn our mind from the world towards God. This Grace came to Ramdas through saints. A man may read many spiritual books and may become a scholar, but he cannot achieve Grace which is necessary for his inner transformation and ultimate realisation of God, unless he comes in contact with an illumined personality filled with divine radiance and peace. Such a contact alone can kindle a soul from within and awaken him to the consciousness of God and from that time make him live for God and God alone.

HOW TO FIND A GURU

Q: How to find a Guru?

Ramdas: That is a very important question. When a man is eagerly aspiring to have a Guru, the Guru will either come to him or he will be taken to the Guru by the Divine within himself. It is in that way that Ramdas was led by God for the Darshan of Ramana Maharshi who was in Tiruvannamalai, though Ramdas was in Mangalore which is far away from Tiruvannamalai.

Q: Why is divine grace available only to a few?

Ramdas: All people do not want it.

Q: In this world where there is so much of deceit, how can we get a Guru?

Ramdas: We need not mind the world. Let us mind ourselves. If we sincerely wish to have a Guru, we shall get his contact and be saved.

Q: What is the sign of those who are progressing on the spiritual path?

Ramdas: They will learn to love everybody, they will have a soft heart, they will feel for those in distress and try their best to relieve such suffering. Fellow-feeling, love for all, compassion, tolerance and forbearance are some of the qualities which a devotee develops if he is really on the path of God.

RAMDAS' APPEAL FOR UNITY

Ramdas will close this speech with a few words. If we have real faith in God and if we are real devotees of God, we must resolve all our differences among ourselves and stand united together. There are differences we find among religions. One religion says that that alone is true and all the other religions are false. So they differ. Again there are differences in the same religion. Take for instance, Hinduism. There are many sects and all of them are fighting among themselves. Even the devotees who worship the same God, say Shiva, are fighting with each other. If they are Vaishnavaites, they are also fighting among themselves. They say, "This is my temple, this is my Ashram" and so on. All these fights are in the name of God. There is only one God who is the father and mother of us all and we are His children. Therefore, we must all unite together in His name. Instead of that, it is indeed strange that we should be fighting with one another. So, Ramdas' prayer to you all is that you

should sink all your differences, love each other, live harmoniously with each other, go to each other's temples and Ashrams, attain universal love, and thereby feel God's presence within and everywhere about you, and finally attain the ultimate goal of our life, which is absolute peace and bliss.

AT THE SRI DANDAYUDHA PANI TEMPLE, KUALA LAMPUR,
29th November, 1954.

MOKSHA IS HERE AND NOW

Beloved Manifestations of God,—Ramdas does not know to address you in any way other than this. Ramdas is hesitating to give you an *upadesh*; because when he looks upon you all as the manifestations of God, he does not know what *upadesh* he can give you. He can only tell you that he got this vision by repeating God's name constantly. This is the easiest way to keep our mind ever in tune with God. The Name can remain on our lips always, only when we have Bhakti or one-pointed devotion to God. Bhakti will come to us when we pray to Him with all our heart. After we have got Bhakti, it is possible for us to remember Him constantly by taking His name. It is not merely that we must be devoted to Him by taking His name, but we must also purify our actions. When you take a medicine as prescribed by the doctor, you have to observe certain diet restrictions also. Unless you observe the diet restrictions, the medicine will have no effect. In the same way, in our daily activities, we must see that we do no wrong to anybody. Whenever we sit for meditation or for Puja, we find that our mind is fickle and wanders here and there. In order to keep our mind in tune with God, one thing is necessary, that is, we must be pure in thought, word and deed. It is therefore enjoined upon us by great souls that the first thing we have to do is to purify ourselves, before we can see God and attain the state of perfect liberation.

It is said that *Chitta shuddhi* — purity of mind—is the one thing required for attaining Jnana. Then alone God's grace will come to us and we shall be blessed with perfect liberation or freedom from the cycle of births and deaths. Moksha is not a thing that will come to us only after death, but Moksha is here and now. The moment we realise we are one with God, we shall be filled with divine bliss and peace.

PRAY GOD TO BECOME YOURS

The object of human life is to attain this blessed state and for that purpose we must pray to Him with all devotion. But instead, we pray to Him for so many perishable things. If we

ask for the things of the world, we shall never become happy. As regards the worldly things, we must be satisfied with whatever God gives us and our heart must be ever pining for Him for His own sake. God gives everything that we desire, but such things do not contribute to our happiness. If you ask God to become yours entirely, He is prepared to become yours. But you do not want Him. You want only the things that He gives you. This is the ignorance which has kept man in bondage. Therefore, as we have been told, if we ask God to come to us, He definitely comes and becomes ours, and along with Him all His greatness, glory and prosperity will follow. God is eternal, whereas the things we ask for from Him are non-eternal. Non-eternal things can never give us eternal happiness. This is the experience of everyone of us. Therefore let us open our heart to Him, ask Him and pray to Him for immortality and bliss. So our prayer should be only, "Lead me from the unreal to the real, lead me from darkness to light, and lead me from death to immortality."

AT THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, PENANG.

30th November, 1954.

GOD-VISION

Beloved Friends,—You are verily, for Ramdas, the manifestations of his Eternal Beloved, Ram Himself. Today the subject on which he has been asked to speak to you is God-vision. God-vision means seeing God. To see God is not to see Him in any particular form but to see Him in all and as all. The entire universe and all beings and creatures in it are really the expressions or manifestations of the Divine. In order to get this universal vision and enjoy bliss and peace eternal, it is absolutely necessary that we should know in what relation we stand with the universe and what are the conditions to be fulfilled before we can be blessed with this supreme vision.

THE COURSE OF DISCIPLINE

What we have to do, in the first place, is to realise that we are the all-pervading, static, silent, nameless and formless Reality, whom we call Purusha or Atman. Atman is the static, motionless, all-pervading aspect of God. To realise this aspect of the Divine we have to go through certain kinds of discipline. Without discipline we shall not be able to subjugate the mind and the desires that are lurking in it and which cause restlessness in us. Because of these desires and of the ego-sense, we are shut off from this vision, and we do things contrary to the attainment of this supreme goal. So, in the first place, we must create a relationship between us and the Divine Being who is our father, mother and master. Let us look upon Him as master and ourselves as servants and thereby humble ourselves before Him, thinking of His greatness.

When we think of Him as the all-pervading, eternal, omnipresent and omniscient being, we feel very small. But we are apt to forget Him, and as soon as we forget Him, the ego asserts itself and we begin to think we are something powerful, something great. When we are obsessed by the ego, we are liable to suffer. We have to keep our mind ever engaged in meditation, in remembrance of and in attunement with God. Without these practices it is not possible to subjugate the mind and free it from

the desires and its wandering nature. By thinking of God constantly, the mind gets purified and is enabled to concentrate on God, to perceive the Divine within us, the all-pervading substratum or basis of this universal manifestation, and finally to have the vision of God everywhere. If you seriously take up this problem of concentrating and purifying your mind, the repetition of God's name will prove to be a panacea for all the ills of the mind, for all the ills of life.

HOW THE NAME WORKS

So God's name is a simple way to purify our mind and realise the Atman. The Name is a guide to us and proves to be a Guru. The Name is given to us by the Guru, and the Guru establishes himself in our heart in the form of the Name. The Name is full of light and glory. When it is in our mind, the mind is filled with light, power, bliss and peace, because the Name is a nectarine pill. When you have a peppermint on your tongue, it does not take time for you to taste the sweetness of it. So when you put the pill of God's name on your tongue, the sweetness of it starts at once and you immediately get the joy and peace born of the revelation of the Divine within you. You become at once conscious that you are not the body but the Spirit. The consciousness comes to you by the repetition of the Name.

Ramdas tells you this from his own experience. He has not done any other Sadhana than the repetition of God's name. By such practice he forgot everything about the world and was completely absorbed in the remembrance of God without stoppage. All this happened by God's grace. Ramdas cannot say that it was by his own will that he did it, but God came to him in the form of the Guru and made him repeat the Name constantly. When we are trying to repeat God's name, we find very often that the Name is not sweet. Whenever Ramdas tells people about the sweetness of the Name, they say that it is not sweet for them and they do not feel or experience the sweetness which Ramdas speaks of. But Ramdas tells them why they do not get the sweetness. It is because they do not take the Name in the spirit in which it ought to be taken. They must surrender themselves to the Divine, humble themselves to the dust, and then take the Name. Then only they can taste the sweetness.

Do not have the pride that you are taking the Name by your will. It is the Divine that makes you take the Name. God's

vision can come to us only when our mind is perfectly pure, that is, when it has the purity born of complete absence of desires and ambitions for worldly things. Everything has to be wiped out because the mind ceases to exist in that state. The joy that Ramdas has been experiencing for the past thirty years or more is simply indescribable. He goes about everywhere telling people that this blessed human life is intended only for getting this joy and not for pursuing the pleasures of the world. These pleasures are nothing compared to the ineffable joy you can get by realising the Self and seeing the whole universe as the manifestation of the Self. When you have this vision, you are full to the brim with joy and what more can you want in the world? You may, of course, feel sorry that people do not understand this and do not take benefit of this human life granted to them by God as a rare gift for achieving this goal. The soul's craving is for immortal bliss and peace; the ephemeral joys do not satisfy it, as they are always accompanied by cares and worries. When this self-existent, eternal and infinite bliss can be achieved in this human life by everyone of us, and everyone of us has the right to attain this beatific state, why should we run after the pleasures of the senses?

THE GLORY OF BRAHMANANDA

When you experience that joy in your heart, your love flows out to all beings in the world; there will be no trace of I-ness left in you, and you will become the embodiment of bliss. All your low desires will be wiped out, all sense of distinction gone, diversity resolved into unity, and multiplicity dissolved into the oneness of all existence, seen and unseen, manifest and unmanifest, and there will be nothing but joy and joy for you. This is what they call *Brahmananda*, the supreme bliss that has been talked of so much in the Hindu scriptures and other religions. They speak of Moksha, Nirvana, liberation and so on. All these are nothing but this supreme beatific state on attaining which you are liberated from the bondage of Karma and in which there is no beginning or end. It is infinite, eternal, beyond time, space and causation. All ideas of time, space and causation, birth and death belong to the relative plane and are therefore entirely false. There is no reality about them. They are all created by man. In that supreme Reality these things do not exist. Time has no value in it. We take time as existing whereas it does not really

exist. If we look at it from our narrow angle of vision we see everything distorted. But if we purify our vision and see things as they are, everything is Divine for us. Everything is Brahman and there is nothing but He everywhere.

We are obsessed by a wrong vision, born of ignorance which makes us unaware of that state, and therefore we have fallen into the clutches of the lower nature. We are behaving like animals and other creatures which are deliberately courting fears and anxieties. Unfortunately we are not making the right use of our life. We cannot be sure we shall get this human life again. Therefore we must make the best use of this life as taught by our ancestors. If we want to realise that supreme state, we have to conquer our lower nature and stand revealed as the embodiment of the Divine. This is the purpose for which human life is given to us.

The test of our devotion to God is our love for all human beings alike. It is said that a man who professes to love God but does not love his fellow-beings is a liar. A lover of humanity is really a lover of God. Ramdas would finally appeal to you to have God's name on your tongue and find out its taste for yourselves. The taste of the pudding lies in its eating. Ramdas may go on telling about the glory of the Name for days together, but until you take it for yourselves you cannot taste its sweetness. It can lift you to the highest spiritual status.

Q: Is it necessary to renounce the world to have the final state of realisation?

RENUNCIATION OF ATTACHMENT

Ramdas: You have to renounce attachment for the world but not the world. Nobody can renounce the world. Even if a man goes to the forest, the world is with him. Once a man, who could not find God anywhere in the world, went to the forest to realise God there. He spent many years in the forest undergoing strict discipline and severe austerities. Finally God gave him His vision in the form of the world. Then this man realised that God was in the world and there was no need for him to have gone to the forest. He went back to the world and lived there happily seeing the whole world as God.

GOD HIMSELF IN GURU'S FORM

Q: Is it true the Guru comes to the aspirant automatically?

Ramdas: How do you realise God? You crave for Him and long for somebody to lead you from darkness to light, so that you may remember God and realise Him. With this keen aspiration you pray to God for guidance. When this cry comes from the innermost core of your heart, the Guru comes to you or you happen to go to the Guru. There must be hunger in your heart for somebody to guide you. God Himself comes in the form of the Guru to liberate you. It is even said that God cannot grant Moksha but only the Guru can do so. To give Moksha is the right of the Guru. God can give you material wealth and prosperity but not liberation.

AT THE ROTARY CLUB, PENANG

1st December, 1954.

WORLD PEACE

Beloved Friends, — Ramdas is very happy to accept your kind invitation to address you a few words on world peace. This is not the first occasion Ramdas has been addressing the members of the Rotary Club. When he visited America, his friends in St. Paul arranged to take him to the Rotary Club where he was asked to speak. He had heard a lot about the Rotary Club which is an international organisation, the membership of which is drawn from all parts of the world. This institution therefore stands for universal brotherhood. Unless we meet together on a common platform, as it were, feel friendly towards each other, love each other, and serve each other in a spirit of brotherhood, we cannot expect world peace.

BASIS FOR PEACE

World peace is based upon the unification of all members of the human race without distinction of creed, nationality, or race. As such, it is in the fitness of things that we, who have assembled here, should feel one with each other in every respect, as belonging to one human family, to one world family. The closer we come together on this basis the better it is for the world condition. The sure way in which this can be brought about is to know that our inner basis is God, who is our father and mother. If we look upon Him as such, then in the light of our spiritual kinship we can always live in peace. When we do so, we create an atmosphere of harmony and goodwill in the world, which will help in removing all discord and strife and in scattering the war clouds hanging over us. This is what Ramdas felt when he visited the various countries of the world.

UNITED PRAYER FOR PEACE

Ramdas is happy to be in your midst, because you are all aiming at world peace. This institution has earned a world fame as it stands for internationalisation and therefore it behoves us that we should live together in an atmosphere of friendliness and

pray to the Divine so that by His grace our efforts to bring about peace in the world may be successful. This is the need of the hour. Peace can come to us only through the union of all the people in the world and this is possible only when we recognise the supreme Spirit — God. When we are in tune with God through meditation and prayer, we are drawn towards each other. This affinity is based on the knowledge of the all-pervading Spirit. Matter is only on the surface, but in the Spirit deep down within us we are all one. In the Spirit there is no difference, because it is the only Reality. You may call it by any name you like and you may approach it through any method you like, and be guided by any teacher, be it Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, Krishna or any other great soul that came to the world to guide us towards God. So many attempts are being made by all the nations and their leaders to produce world peace and bring about better understanding among the people. But these have proved unsuccessful. The only way is to appeal to the Divine within us, the Divine which pervades everywhere, so that by His power we can have better understanding of the goal we should reach. The last two wars have caused a lot of devastation in the world. We can prevent wars only by God's grace. Therefore, Ramdas' appeal to you all who are assembled here is: "Let us unite together in the Spirit and offer our prayers to the Almighty Lord of the universe so that by His blessings, by His grace and by His power, love, goodwill, peace and harmony may prevail on earth and all may live together in peace, prosperity and mutual service."

AT THE SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAM AND ORPHANAGE, PENANG
1st December, 1954.

'SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S EXPERIENCES

Beloved Manifestations of Divinity,—You are all, for Ramdas, the very forms of his Eternal Beloved. We have gathered here under the holy influence of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and it is therefore in the fitness of things that Ramdas should speak a few words about this great Mahatma. All of you know that the aim of human life is to achieve eternal happiness. Ramakrishna Paramahansa, by his life, has clearly shown us how we can achieve this supreme goal. When he started his life at Dakshineswar, he was a great devotee of the Divine Mother and therefore he was on the path of God-realisation through devotion. His mind was so absorbed in the remembrance of the Divine Mother, that he lost all consciousness of the outer world. By this utter devotion to the Mother and his entire dedication to her, he was able to get her Darshan. It was not merely the personal Darshan of the Divine Mother that he had, but by the grace of the Guru who happened to go to him, he was able to attain also the knowledge of his oneness in the Self with the Divine Mother. This knowledge of the Atman or his realisation of oneness with the supreme Spirit enabled him to behold the Divine Mother in the whole universe, as all beings, creatures and things. In this supreme state he enjoyed a peace and bliss which was simply indescribable. So Ramakrishna Paramahansa's life is a beacon to us all, as it shows us the way to realise the supreme goal of life and enjoy eternal happiness.

SIX FORMS OF DEVOTION

The path he has pointed out to us all is the path of devotion. It is through Bhakti alone that we can have the Darshan of God. There are six forms of Bhakti, as described by a great saint of Bengal. These six forms of Bhakti show the nature of our relationship with God. They are *Shanta Bhakti*, *Dasya Bhakti*, *Sakhya Bhakti*, *Vatsalya Bhakti*, *Prema Bhakti* and *Sakhi Bhakti*. As examples, we have Ambarisha for *Shanta Bhakti*, Hanuman for *Dasya Bhakti*, Arjuna for *Sakhya Bhakti*, Yasoda for *Vatsalya Bhakti*, Radha for *Prema Bhakti* and Gopis for *Sakhi Bhakti*.

What we have to do is to have a relationship with God in any way, as described in the six forms now mentioned, and then offer our heart, our mind, and our entire being to the Divine, surrendering ourselves to Him in all respects. You know, Ramakrishna looked upon God as Mother, and himself as the son of the Mother.

Bhakti is of two kinds — *Sakama* and *Nishkama*. The devotee who practises *Sakama Bhakti* asks God to give him worldly things, such as wealth, name, fame, and also enjoyments of the senses. *Nishkama Bhakti* expects from God nothing but His Darshan or the realisation of the devotee's oneness with God. *Nishkama Bhakti* alone will enable us to attain that supreme happiness, which this soul hungers for. *Nishkama Bhakti* releases us from the bondage of Karma and gives us the ultimate state of perfect liberation or Moksha. Therefore, whenever we go to the temple, whenever we sit up for any practice of meditation, Bhajan or Japa, we must have in our mind only one thought and that thought or desire should be to have the Darshan or vision of God and nothing else. This does not mean that we should give up the life in the world, but our aim must be to reach God and we must do all actions with a view to achieve this goal. We cannot realise God, we cannot see Him, we cannot attain Jnana, unless our mind is perfectly pure. Therefore we must constantly think of God, remember Him and do all actions in His name and for His sake in order to purify our heart from all low desires.

HOW TO DISPEL FEAR OF WAR

When we have achieved purity of mind, we become conscious of the Divine presence within us and everywhere about us. In this state, when we pray to God to bring peace and goodwill on earth, God will respond to and fulfil our prayer. The peace that we crave for in this world, in its present state of distraction, discord and strife, can be got only if we go within ourselves and find the Source of our being — God. In the light of this experience, we can disseminate peace and produce a peace atmosphere so that the world may be free from discord and strife. In our wanderings in different parts of the world, we have noticed the fear of war prevalent everywhere. The atmosphere is almost surcharged with a feeling of insecurity and a dread of a great catastrophe. This fear is there because we have lost faith in God. If we believe in God, who is ruling over us and protecting us,

and if we pray to Him with a singleness of heart, His power will descend on the world and dispel the clouds of war that are hanging over us.

KEEN HUNGER FOR PEACE

Another thing that Ramdas noticed when he travelled in the Western and Eastern countries is that there is a keen hunger in the hearts of all beings for peace in the world. All the believers in God, to whatever denomination or creed they might belong, are whole-heartedly praying to God to bring peace and goodwill in the world. In the Christian churches, Protestant or Catholic, you will find people crowding in overflowing numbers during the time of prayer. Ramdas has also noticed that innumerable new spiritual and religious associations have been started all over Europe, America and Japan, in order that people can gather in the name of the Supreme Spirit and pray to Him to prevent the outbreak of another war in the world. Before Ramdas went outside India on this world tour, he was going round India and there he found millions of people taking God's name and holding prayer meetings. Everywhere there is an awakening, in the hearts of humanity, towards God. The present condition, which God has brought about in the world, seems to be favourable for turning our mind towards God, because it is in times of difficulty and trouble that we remember God. Therefore, the present condition is perhaps necessary according to God's will, to increase our devotion to God and lead us to union with Him.

GLORY OF DIVINE NAME

Before closing this speech, Ramdas would like to tell you something about the power, greatness and glory of the Divine name. God's name is not different from God. The moment you place the Name on your tongue, you begin to feel your union with Him and the real joy and peace which you are aspiring for. There is no easier way to think of God, to remember Him, and to feel the consciousness of His presence with us, than the chanting of His holy name. For instance, when thousands of us gather together and sing the name of God, we can find for ourselves how it raises pure and holy emotions in our hearts and gives us the experience of joy, peace and ecstasy. The singing of God's name dissolves all our differences, and we feel that we are one in Spirit

with all, and that we are all children of one God. The differences to which we cling on the basis of religion, creed, caste, colour and nationality are entirely false. When we know that we are the children of one Divine Parent, there is no scope for us to think in terms of division or separateness.

Our Shastras clearly tell us that everything is Brahman. The distinctions that we see, the divisions that we observe, are utterly false. They are born of our ignorance. It is not only that we must try to stop war and dissensions between countries and amongst ourselves, but also we must create unity based upon the knowledge of the one indwelling Spirit, whom we call Brahman, Truth, or the ultimate Reality. This sense of separation and this consciousness of diversity will go when love floods our heart and flows out to humanity. This universal love, which we should cultivate, is possible only when we have the universal vision or the vision of Divinity everywhere. This supreme state of internal purity, universal love and universal vision, can come to us only when our mind is perfectly concentrated, purified and freed from the low desires which are lurking within, and when ultimately the ego-sense is eliminated.

THE EASIEST WAY

The easiest way, as Ramdas has already told you, is the ceaseless or continuous remembrance of God. We do Puja, sit up for meditation for a while, and do other spiritual practices in order to keep our mind pure. By such practices it may be possible for sometime to keep the mind still. But as we come out and engage ourselves in active life, when we have to do our daily duties, the mind goes out of control and becomes restless and agitated. To keep our mind ever in a state of serenity, calmness and equanimity, the only way is to have the name of God as much as possible on our tongue. By continuous repetition of God's name, a state of Divine consciousness develops within us, and we feel the Divine presence everywhere with us, even when we are active in the affairs of the world. We then feel that by His will and power alone we are doing everything. In such a state we are incapable of doing any harm to anybody. On the other hand, our actions will go to relieve the distress of others and give peace and happiness to all. So let us understand that the aim of this human life is to realise God by which alone we can attain eternal happiness and peace. Our thoughts must dwell

on Him, our tongue must take His name and all our actions must be done as service to Him. In conclusion, Ramdas prays to the Almighty Lord of the universe, who dwells in the hearts of us all, that He may reveal Himself in your heart and fill you through and through with his radiance, joy, strength and wisdom. May His grace and blessings ever pour upon you all!

AT THE HU YEW SEAH SCHOOL, PENANG.

1st December, 1954.

GOD-REALISATION

Beloved Friends, — Today Ramdas is asked to speak to you on God-realisation. God-realisation is a state which does not admit of expression. We can only experience that state and know what it is. Still great sages and saints who have realised God have tried to express what it is, for the benefit of those who are striving to attain that blessed state. A God-realised soul does not develop horns or look unusual or extraordinary as distinguished from others. He is like anyone of us in external appearance and mode of life, but inwardly he is an illumined soul ever one with God, ever conscious of God and ever filled with Divine peace and bliss. He radiates love, joy and light, wherever he goes, and in whatever condition he remains. His heart is pure as crystal. The love that he gives to everybody is a spontaneous outflow from him. It flows out to everybody alike, just as a burning lamp which gives light to all who approach it, or like the sun who gives light and heat to all alike. The saint gives his grace, love and kindness to everybody who approaches him, whether he is a good man or a bad man. He does not see any distinctions. Thus a God-realised soul is a blessing to humanity. He is verily an embodiment of God. He who comes in contact with such a soul is freed from all sins.

PARAMA PREM

Now the question is how to realise this supreme, blessed and beatific state of complete union with God and remain ever in the intoxication of divine bliss and peace. That requires, in the first place, the grace of a saint. About grace, Ramdas spoke to you yesterday. When grace is there, your progress becomes easy. He awakens in you a great longing for God and thereafter your heart hungers for God and for nothing else. This hunger makes you remember Him constantly. A miser who is attached to wealth thinks always of wealth. So also when the devotee's heart is awakened and he has intense longing for God, he remembers God constantly. Many people say that when they repeat God's name they cannot concentrate upon God. This is because they

have no longing for Him. This longing for God and holding God as our dearest object of love is Bhakti. Bhakti, as described in the Narada Bhakti Sutra, is *Parama Prem*—greatest love for God. When you have the greatest love for God, automatically your mind will be remembering Him. Otherwise your mind will run here and there, because you have greater love for worldly things. You must have *Parama Prem* for God. When this *Prem* or Bhakti is created in the heart by the contact of a saint, then you cannot but pine for Him and hunger for Him day and night and therefore remember Him constantly and become mad of Him. It is a divine madness that seizes you in this state. All allurements of the world leave you and all the pleasures of the senses appear as dust or ashes to you. Your one longing is to realise God, to feel Him and to see Him. This is the kind of devotion, the concentrated, one-pointed and entire longing for God, that brings you near Him and ultimately makes you feel one with Him.

FOUR STEPS TO FINAL ACHIEVEMENT

You now become aware that you are not the body, senses or the mind, but the supreme Self. This is what is called *Atma Jnana* or realisation of the Atman. It is not a new thing that you achieve by effort. It was there already, but only now you become conscious of it. To become conscious of this, the mind-stream must disappear, and it can disappear only by constant remembrance of the Divine. For constant remembrance of the Divine, the repetition of God's name is prescribed. By intense practice, concentration on God becomes possible, remembrance becomes continuous and the mind becomes pure and still. The pure and still mind is, in fact, no mind. It is pure Spirit, it is the Truth. When the screen of the mind disappears, you become aware that you are the immortal Reality or Truth. The whole universe is pervaded by that silent, serene and static Spirit or Atman. You get the joy of the Supreme Self. This is the first step. The second step is to see the whole universe as the manifestation of the Self. This is *Viswarupa Darshan*.

The third step is to realise that one Divine Power activates everything in the universe, makes the sun shine, the breeze blow and the plants grow, and in general makes everything live and move. We must submit to that Power and feel conscious always that that Power is supreme. This is what we call surrender to the will of God or to the power of God. The I-ness makes you

feel that you are doing everything, but when your surrender is complete, the I-ness or the ego-consciousness disappears. The desires, the longings, the consciousness of the body that gives rise to the ego-sense which makes you feel that you are separate from everything else and that you are a perishable body subject to birth, growth and death — all these delusions that had made you perfectly oblivious of your birthless and deathless state, now vanish completely, and you live, move and have your being in Him. In this state it is that you feel liberated like a bird set free from the cage.

There is yet a fourth state. Even after getting all these exalted experiences — oneness with God, oneness with the universe and oneness with the universal Power — you still maintain a constant fellowship of the Divine, who appears as your Guru or in any other form, and you never lose contact with Him. You feel His company ever with you. So these are the four kinds of transformation that takes place in you. But even that is not all. You must also realise a state which is unthinkable, incomprehensible, which is all these and still beyond all these. This is the all-comprehensive, all-inclusive, all-transcendent Godhead in whom everything exists and there is nothing outside Him. Therefore, in the scriptures it is said that God is *achintya*. You cannot think of what He is and what He is not. If you say He is bliss, you are wrong. If you say He is not bliss, you are wrong. He is inexpressible. How can you describe Him in terms of speech and thought?

KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EXPERIENCE

People try to expound what He is. That is why there is so much clash. One says God is one and another says He is two. Yet a third one says God is only personal and yet another says He is impersonal. This is all because the man who has realised God cannot say what He is and what He is not. The Infinite and Eternal cannot be expressed by the help of our puny intellect. Those who have experience can alone know Him. They say it is like the dumb man tasting sugar and vainly endeavouring to express its taste to others. Even if he has the power to talk, he will not be able to express it. What about a dumb man then? So it is with the realised soul. He goes about telling everybody what the state is, but he can never fully express it. He attempts and exhibits his helplessness. His contact however is powerful.

It is not by talking with him and hearing him that you get the highest benefit, but by his very contact. He radiates peace and joy, and when you come within his aura, you feel elevated.

THREE WAYS OF SPIRITUAL CONTACT

Saints have got three ways of quickening the soul and creating in it a longing for God by giving a foretaste of the joy of union with God. These are: (1) by sight—when the saint's eye falls upon you, your heart is changed, becomes fertile, and is charged with emotion, joy and peace; (2) by thought—if he remembers you, that does the trick; (3) by touch—if he touches you, the thing is done. You go to him and ask him to bless you. He puts his hand on you and imparts a current, and you are changed. When Ramdas went to see Ramana Maharshi, he imparted to him his grace through his eyes. He gazed at Ramdas intently for a few minutes, and Ramdas' body thrilled with a strange ecstasy.

HOW RAMDAS WAS GUIDED

Ramdas will now, in his own way, tell you how he was guided on the path of God-realisation. Buddha taught him to annihilate all desires and reach that state of perfect quiescence called Nirvana, which is equivalent to what the Hindu scriptures call Jnana. So far as the annihilation of desires is concerned, Buddha stands supreme. Krishna taught Ramdas that the whole universe is His form, and based upon this very knowledge of the all-pervading Self, one attains Moksha. Jesus taught him that we should love all beings equally and our hearts should flow out in love to all beings. The infinite love that is at the very basis of our life should be realised. It is love that dissolves all diversities into unity. If you love everybody alike, the distinction which you see between man and man, community and community, country and country, disappears. Your love will cover everybody alike. Now Ramdas is speaking to you also about Mohammed for whom he had the highest veneration, as he had for all the saints of the world. He taught us self-surrender. He said we should make Allah's will our will. So long as we have our own will, we shall always be unhappy. We want everything to happen as we will, and when that does not happen we are upset. In the early days of our practice, when our will does not prevail, we

must submit to His will and say, "Oh God, Thy will be done," and our mind becomes calm. Ultimately our surrender becomes so complete that we come to know that everything happens by His will. There is no other will working at all. Your will is false. The Divine will is everything. This is called complete surrender; elimination of the individual will and making God's will our will. This we learn from the teachings of Mohammed.

From the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev we learn that the continuous remembrance of God's name is the only Sadhana. Ramdas went to the Punjab and met many Sikh saints, of whom there was one named Bhai Vir Singhji, a great votary of God's name. When we were parting after a few days' stay together, he came to Ramdas and said that he had a request to make to Ramdas. Ramdas said, "You are a Mahatma, you are a saint, and for Ramdas you are Ram Himself. What do you mean by asking a favour from this humble servant?" He said, "You call me Ram. I do not want to be Ram. I want only Ramnam. You should bless me so that I can have Ramnam always on my tongue." Those who keep the Divine name continuously on their lips do not want even the Darshan of God. They want only the Name on their lips. Divine name is nectar, and when you drink that nectar every second, why do you want anything else? In the early days of Ramdas' Sadhana, as willed by God, he was repeating God's name constantly. It was running like a stream in his mind. Ramdas drank and drank this nectar until the drink and the drinker became one. He never knew that the drink would make him like itself. So, duality disappeared. Friends ask him why he does not repeat the Name now? Ramdas says, the person who repeated it has disappeared. The servant has become one with the master. The Name brought the servant and the master together and made them fuse into each other losing all distinctions. The Name has become everything for him. The universe is His name, because the Name and God are not different. The Name is God Himself.

SAINTS ARE KINGLY DOCTORS

Saints want everybody to be liberated from the thralldom of desire and ignorance. They are called Raja Vaidyas or kingly doctors. Ordinary doctors relieve the ills of the body by operations, etc., but this physician is greater because he heals the disease of the mind. The mind is stricken with worldly desire,

trishna or *Vasana*. How to cure it? One saint has beautifully expressed it. He says, "If you touch the feet of a saint and take the dust of his feet, that very instant all the *Vasanas* in you are burnt to ashes." Then you will repeat God's name and it will taste very sweet. Saint's company is, therefore, very important and essential to lead you to the goal. God-realisation is not an easy thing. However hard one may struggle, one cannot attain it. By a saint's grace alone, one can get it. Many are trying to get God-realisation by such practices as Hatha Yoga, etc. Ramdas does not say that these are not necessary. They are useful for the purpose of remembering God constantly. Ramdas had done all these things. He had fasted, but it was only in order that he might keep the Name always on his tongue. When the Name is on the tongue, the mind is pure, and as soon as the Name disappears the mind becomes impure. The Name disappears when the body becomes sluggish. Continuous remembrance of God depends upon physical environments, food and so many other conditions. So you have to regulate your life accordingly. Then alone all the desires will disappear and you will become egoless and humble. There must be complete self-effacement in us. Then alone we can rise. They say in Hindi that through *Abhiman* or pride we sink and through humility we float. Let us humble ourselves and take His name with all devotion and feel that He is guiding us and that by His guidance we are doing everything. If we know this, we shall never go wrong, and shall always follow the path of righteousness.

GLORY OF SAINTS

God-realisation means dwelling always in God, feeling oneness with Him. So there is no place for hatred towards anybody. For a God-realised soul there is nothing to gain because he is happy and contented within himself. He has no desire for the things of the world, and has no sense of differentiation at all. This state gives rise to waves of ecstasy in him and his whole being is filled with divine light and divine lustre. He lives a life of spontaneity. There is no such thing as toiling and moiling for him. He has no cares or worries and no thought of the morrow. He has transcended time, space and causation. He has become the very embodiment of God, the very mould of God. He is blissful and spontaneous like a child. What prevents us from leading the spontaneous life is the ego. It has entered into us

and spoilt the whole life. God is an eternal child. Therefore it is said that we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven unless we become childlike. Saints are childlike. They are not cunning. They do not distrust anybody. They are not calculating. They have nobody to hate, no illwill, no spirit of vengeance. They are a mountain of patience. They bear everything calmly. Even if somebody abuses them they do not retaliate.

There is a beautiful song by a Maharashtrian saint, "*Dhanya Jagi. . .*": "He is the blessed soul who is dancing in ecstasy with God's name on his lips. He is always inebriated with the intoxication of the Divine name. For him, pleasure and pain are alike. Joy and grief are alike. He is kind to all living creatures in the world. He is the very flame or torch of Jnan and his heart is rising in waves out of love for all beings in the world. As regards the pleasures of the senses, he is perfectly detached. He has no idea of I and you. He is always contented." Ramdas remembered this song when he spoke to you about the contentment of a saint. He has nothing to gain. He is satisfied whatever be the situation in which God places him, because he knows God pervades everywhere and there is no place where He is not. The saint is full, complete and perfect. The notion of "I know and I do not know" has been thrown away by him. Though he lives in the world just like anyone of us, his mind is ever engaged in the remembrance of God, whether he is awake or asleep. He is in tune with the Infinite always. These are the characteristics of a saint. It is said contentment is a continual feast.

Q: How can we create faith or love for God in those who have no love or faith?

Ramdas: By ourselves loving God and living a real life. By loving God we love our fellow-beings. If we say we love God and do not love our fellow-beings, others will ask us: "Is this love for God? If it is so, we do not want to love God at all." So if you want to create love and faith in others, you must set an example to them by yourself living the right life.

CEYLON

AT THE SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, COLOMBO.

3rd December, 1954.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA — AN AVATAR

Beloved forms of Ramdas' Eternal Master and Mother, — You are verily, for Ramdas, the manifestations of the Divine. As such he is addressing you a few words, not to teach you, but only to express his overflowing feelings at finding himself in this holy atmosphere, for which he is deeply grateful to Swami Prematmananda and the management of the Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo. We have assembled here under the divine auspices and grace of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Sri Ramakrishna had liberated millions of souls from the bondage of ignorance and he is doing the same even now, and will do so for ever. Ramakrishna is an Avatar, occupying the same rank as Buddha, Krishna, Rama and Jesus. You should not consider him to be an ordinary mortal who was illumined with light, love and wisdom of God. He had descended on earth specially for the uplift and liberation of mankind. What he teaches us is that we should free ourselves from ignorance and realise that we are Brahman.

HIS TEACHINGS

Brahman is the undifferentiated, all-pervading, static, divine spirit and existence. We should gain this knowledge in order to be free from the bondage of Karma and attain a state of beatitude in which we enjoy eternal bliss and peace. Ramakrishna taught us that we should follow the path of devotion, and by constant remembrance of and meditation on the Divine, surrender ourselves to Him and be free from the ego-sense, realising our identity with Him. After realising that we are the static, all-pervading Brahman, we are to realise the presence of the Divine everywhere and behold the whole universe as the expression of Brahman. Ramakrishna himself passed through intense Sadhana, though there was no need for him to do any Sadhana. Whatever he did was for our sake, so that we might follow the path, which he chalked out for us, in order to realise God in all His aspects. God is not merely the static Brahman, but he is also the universal

manifestation and the dynamic power active in the universe. So it is that we should have not only Atma Jnan but also the *Viswarupa Darshan*. Lastly, our entire life should be dedicated to the universal Mother or Shakti who is activating all the creatures of this world. So long as we retain even the smallest ego-sense, we are separate from that Divine existence. It is not in Samadhi alone that we can be in tune with the Infinite. We can realise God and feel His presence always, in all walks of life and in all activities, and know that all the movements and forms are His. It is easy to sit silent and concentrate the mind upon the Divine and lose ourselves in Him. But when we are caught in the world, we lose that consciousness and are affected by the conflicts of the opposite forces, with the result that we forget the Divine. Even when we are active and moving in the world, we must be conscious of the unity of life and be free from the sense of diversity, both in the Spirit and also in the manifestations. We must be one with all existence in the various forms. In the Bhagavad Gita, God has taught us that we have to see Him everywhere and in everything. Just as a thread passing through the beads of a rosary makes the beads into one rosary, so also we must be able to see all the forms as the expression of one indwelling Spirit. This simile has been improved upon by a Maharashtrian saint who says that the Divine is like a gold wire on which are strung gold beads. So the manifestation is He and the unmanifest Reality is also He. As unmanifest He is the calm, static and silent Spirit, and in the manifestation He seems to be moving and changing. So in both aspects—the manifest and the unmanifest—it is the one supreme God who is all-comprehensive, all-inclusive and at the same time all-transcendent. This supreme Godhead has to be realised by us, and how this was done by Ramakrishna has been shown in his life and teachings.

OUR DUTY

It is not merely that we have to read books and adore him, but we must imbibe the spirit of his teachings, draw lessons from his simple life, and walk in his footsteps. By doing so we shall purify our hearts and behold the Divine within and without. This was his message to us all and it is still reverberating and will continue to do so eternally. He often hammered upon those who came in contact with him that the object of human life was to realise God. Without this aim, we are just like animals. He always talked about the necessity of Vairagya for developing Bhakti or

devotion for God. Vairagya is a sense of detachment from sense-objects. We see only diversity outside and we are attached to the objects, but not to the indwelling Spirit. God has definitely told us that He is seated in the hearts of all beings and forms. Whenever we see any form, we must see not only the form but also the indwelling Reality. This is true vision and it liberates us from the sense of diversity and makes us realise the oneness of all existence. This is the message of our Rishis. It is not merely in particular places or in solitude that we should practise this vision of life, but also in the market places and busy thoroughfares. We must feel the Divine presence always about us. This is called Sahaja Samadhi.

SAHAJA SAMADHI

There are so many kinds of Samadhi. The other states of Samadhi are changing, they come and go. Sahaja Samadhi is the normal state. This is constant. You are moving in the Divine and are one with the Divine at all times. Your eyes behold Him everywhere and your love flows out towards everybody equally. There is none whom you dislike, because there is no sense of duality. You see yourself alone everywhere. As you see yourself in a mirror, you see the whole universe as the expression of your soul and that soul is not the individual soul but the universal or cosmic Soul. It is cosmic consciousness. That is what you have to develop by devotional practices, by singing God's name, by going to temples and having the contact of saints. If you surrender yourself to God, you get by His grace the knowledge of Brahman, and you can then see the universe as the manifestation of the Mother. That is the aim of our life.

We must be serious in our endeavour to realise the Divine and utterly dedicate ourselves to the Divine Mother and do everything according to Her will. Our will and power is all false. We think we are doing everything by our will and power. This is perfectly untrue. Those who know the truth tell us that we are unnecessarily worrying about things. All these experiences come to us through the grace of great souls like Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Ramakrishna came down to the earth to show what it is to become a God-man. We should not merely worship God as Spirit, but we must become one with Him. This is Atma Jnan and is the basis of universal vision. The Bhagavad Gita has shown us what *Viswarupa Darshan* is. It is to see everything in the world

as the expression of the Divine. This is a sublime vision in which there is no distinction or diversity. There is nothing existing different from ourselves. When Ramakrishna was worshipping the idol of Kali in the temple, he used to take some flowers to adore the image, but instead of putting the flowers on the image he would put them on his own head. That means he himself became the Mother, and wherever he turned his eyes, there the Divine Mother stood revealed. It is the Divine Mother who is moving the whole universe. It is She who creates, preserves and destroys. Shiva and Shakti are the two aspects of the one Supreme Reality. In the Tantric philosophy, Paramashiva is Shiva and Shakti combined. He is at once both and beyond both. In the Bhagavad Gita, the all-transcendent Godhead is described as Purushottama. In Vedanta the same thing has been spoken of as Brahman and Maya. Brahman and Maya together form the one supreme Being which is beyond Brahman and Maya. So in all these philosophies we find the same truth told to us in different words. That is the supreme summit of spiritual experience to be attained in this very life, so that we may be entirely free from the fetters of desires.

GOD'S NAME IS THE PATH

The easiest way to attain this beatific vision, Ramdas can tell you, is the repetition of God's holy name. Ramdas has read in the teachings of all the great sages and saints of India, about the glory of the Divine name. Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother also have been telling us to repeat God's name and do Japa, because it is so very easy. We need not have any paraphernalia to repeat God's name. We can utter it at all times and at all places. After practising various types of disciplines, Sri Ramakrishna found the repetition of God's name most efficacious and suitable. Saint Tulsidas says that God's name is like a light that you keep on the doorstep. You can get light inside as well as outside. So if you have the Name on your tongue, you will have the divine light within you and also everywhere about you. Such is the power of the Divine name. He who has uttered the Divine name constantly can alone know its sweetness and power. Ramdas can vouch for the power of the Name, but you should repeat it without desiring anything from God. As soon as you repeat the Name, you start getting bliss. It is not that anything can be attained *after* repeating the Name for some time. The attainment is immediate. This is what Ramdas felt. The sweet-

ness of the Name is such that it will not leave you. Ramdas went on drinking the sweetness of the Name until the drink and the drinker became one. After that, the repetition automatically stopped and he was filled with ecstasy which has remained with him ever since, without any effort. People ask him why he stopped repeating it. Ramdas tells them that the repeater has disappeared. There is nothing but joy, and this joy has been with him for the last thirty years. He has been going about telling everybody to repeat the name of God constantly.

All the names of God are equally powerful. You may repeat the name Shiva, Rama, Krishna, or any other Name you like with full faith and devotion, and you will see that the Name will purify you and free you from all desires and attachments. When you sit for meditation, you find the mind wandering here and there. This is because the mind is not pure. Purity can come only when you repeat God's name constantly. When the mind is restless and agitated, you cannot know who you are. You think you are only a bundle of flesh and bones. But when your mind has been purified and made still by the practice of meditation, you come to realise that you are the immortal Spirit.

Now you have all been singing God's name. The vibrations created thereby were merging our mind in them. By hearing the sound of the Name, the mind gets absorbed in it. It forgets to run about because it is imbued or intoxicated with the sweetneess of the Name. All the Vasanas and desires within us are uprooted, and so the mind becomes calm. For progress on the spiritual path, Satsang or contact of great souls is an important thing. You must see them, hear their nectarine words, follow their advice and take God's name. This will liberate us from all desires, elevate us and give us the joy of the Eternal. This is possible only by contact of saints, and by taking God's holy name. If these two things are done, you are saved. The object of all Sadhana is only to keep God's name continuously on our lips. No Sadhana can itself take us to God. It is only a means so that we may repeat the Name continuously and have unbroken remembrance of God. When remembrance leaves us, the ego-sense takes hold of us and the mind becomes restless. As soon as there is remembrance the ego-sense disappears and we are in tune with God. Ramdas will stop this talk by invoking Sri Ramakrishna's blessings to help you all attain this supreme goal. May he grant you continuous remembrance of God and may he bless you with the supreme vision, experience and realisation !

AT THE SINDHI COMMUNITY CENTRE, COLOMBO.
4th December, 1954.

DEVOTION AND SELF-SURRENDER

Beloved Friends, — Ramdas is going to speak to you now on devotion and self-surrender. You all know that this precious human life is granted to us by God only for realising Him. The aim of human life and all lives in the world is to attain immortal happiness and peace. This immortal happiness and peace can be achieved only by realising God, because God stands for immortal bliss and peace. The very nature of God is pure joy. If you realise Him, you attain that pure joy. This consummation or attainment of supreme bliss is possible only in human life, which has been endowed with all the qualities necessary for achieving this goal. So it behoves everyone of us to strive to attain this.

THE PATH OF DEVOTION

The question now is how we can attain this. How can we realise God? This can be done only through one-pointed and unqualified devotion for God. Devotion takes us near Him. It makes us aware of His presence within us and everywhere about us. So the first thing necessary is that we should open some kind of relationship with Him, looking upon Him as our father, mother, or friend and our all-in-all. If we do this, it will be possible for us to approach Him gradually until we find Him, see Him and realise our identity with Him. So what is needed is an intense aspiration to realise Him. By realising Him alone we can free ourselves from unhappiness and have true and lasting happiness. Our devotion for Him should be such that we should aspire only to have Him and nothing else.

Generally, devotion is practised by people, who call themselves devotees, for getting many worldly things from God. Of course, they are also devotees. You should know, however, that whatever we get from God is perishable and therefore incapable of giving us real or lasting happiness. Real happiness can come to us only when we have God who is eternal. God says He will give us whatever we pray for, but those things will not help us to have true happiness and freedom. If we want Him, He is

prepared to become ours. So our aim should be to have Him and Him alone. Our prayer to Him should be that He may bless us with His vision only and enable us to be with Him, to feel His presence always with us and know that He and we are one. In that state of perfect fusion with Him, we enjoy eternal bliss and peace which are born of our identity with Him, transcending all earthly ambitions and aspirations and rising above the individual sense.

It is the individual sense that makes us think that we are merely bodies subject to birth, growth and decay. We are not individual entities, but the immortal Truth ever in tune with God. It is usual with us, whenever we are in trouble, to pray to God to free us from it. Some years ago, Ramdas came across a poem by a devotee who knew apparently what it is to pray. He prayed to God, "Oh God, do not grant my prayers." People generally ask God to grant their prayers, but this devotee prayed that his prayers may not be granted. We, in our foolishness, pray for so many things that are not good for us. We should ask God to give us only what He thinks best for us. In this alone lies our salvation, freedom and peace. If we deny ourselves the supreme privilege of human life to attain and realise God, and waste it in the pursuit of transitory sense-pleasures, we shall have to repent for it in the end. Our aim day and night should be to realise God, to get eternal happiness and freedom.

RIGHT PRAYER

So what we have to pray to God is that He should grant us one-pointed devotion for Him, so that we may lose ourselves in Him and attain our union with Him. This will release us from birth and death and give us liberation. God has thousands of attributes. We have nothing to do with those attributes. We, of course, sing about Him and His greatness. His predominant characteristic, which appeals to us and which is our mainstay, is His compassionate nature. When we approach Him with our heart full of restlessness and tumult, fed up with the external pleasures in which we are caught from day to day, and when we open out our heart to Him, asking Him to free us from the tangle of this worldly life and grant us that beatitude in which we can ever be in His presence, and enjoy pure bliss and peace, formed of His union and vision, He will surely grant our prayer. If we

go to Him in this spirit of surrender and complete dedication and offer ourselves to Him so that His grace may enliven our heart and enlighten our intellect, He will grant our prayer. It depends upon how we approach Him.

You have been singing the name and praises of God. There are some songs which melt the heart of a devotee when he approaches Him in that spirit. Those songs were sung by great sages and saints, and by those songs they taught us how to pray to God and in what spirit we should approach Him. That prayer which is offered from the core of our heart is always listened to by God, because He is the friend of the helpless. He is more loving to us than our mother, because his love is unlimited. If we approach Him in a spirit of complete surrender, He will take us up just like the mother when her child approaches her in a miserable condition. God is our father and mother. If we approach Him in all sincerity and with intense longing, He will shower His grace on us and liberate us from ignorance, granting us the supreme blessedness of union with Him. When we are one with Him, we shall have no more cares and anxieties and all that we do will be done spontaneously and cheerfully. It is not that we are free from activities in this state. He makes us do actions and we shall feel we are doing everything by His will. It is the Divine power that pervades the whole universe and activates us. When we surrender ourselves to this Divine power which we call Shakti, She takes us into Herself. Then we come to realise that it is not by our will that we are doing anything but by Her power. When we live such a life, Her protecting hands are always with us. We shall be as safe as a child in the hands of its mother. God is all compassion, all mercy, all goodness and all love. If we realise God as such and feel His presence everywhere about us, we have attained our goal. Nowhere shall we find anything except Him.

NEED FOR HUMILITY

We have lost our contact with Him. Therefore what we have to do is to contact Him again. In this connection Ramdas remembers a Hindi saying, "*Jal me meena pyasi*": "The fish is in the water and it says it is thirsty. Hearing this I cannot but laugh" We are ever living and moving in God who is happiness and supreme bliss. Yet we say we are unhappy. Why are we unhappy? Because we have lost the awareness of that

supreme Spirit which is the basis of this universe. The whole universe is filled with His presence. To realise this truth we should surrender ourselves to the Divine Mother and Master, who is our all-in-all. How does the fish feel thirsty even though it is in the water? As long as it moves erect in water, the water does not get into its gills, but when the fish bends, it can drink the water. So long as we do not bend - feel we are doing everything ourselves and are proud - we cannot have the experience of the joy in which we are living and moving. When we give up this pride and surrender ourselves to the Divine Mother, the ego-sense disappears and we shall enjoy bliss and peace. The intellect within us is arrogant and becomes the cause of our pride. If we bend down in all humility before the Divine, we shall have His vision and we can enjoy the bliss which is our birthright as human beings. If we become aware of the Divine within and see the whole universe as the expression of the Divine, our life becomes blissful. Otherwise, we are caught, as it were, in a cage and are miserable. Some kind of ignorance has seized us and we know that to free ourselves from this ignorance is the aim of life. Therefore devotion to God is the simple way by which we can completely free ourselves from this ego-sense and realise that this universe is filled with one Divine Existence.

GOD'S PROTECTION

This vision is possible only through devotion. God says that He is not with the Yogi, not with the Tapaswin in the forest, but with the devotee who sings His glory and greatness with all love and devotion. So if we, in all humility and devotion, take His name constantly and sing His glory, we shall find Him and attain union with Him. By attaining union with Him, our ego-sense will disappear and we shall behold the Divine everywhere. This vision is our ultimate goal. Our life will then be like that of a child, pure, innocent and flowing. There will be no cares or worries, because we shall be wholly under the protection of the Divine. Our heart will be filled with compassion, love and mercy. The devotee, who has entrusted himself completely to Him, will be protected in mysterious ways. We have got many instances of such protection. The instances of Draupadi, Prahlada and many others are before us.

There is one Sloka in the Bhagavad Gita which describes beautifully how God protects those who are depending upon Him:

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

"To those people who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, to those ever harmonious I bring full security." We can tell you from our own experience how this Sloka has been fully demonstrated and verified in our life. Ramdas' new life, in which he gave himself up entirely to the Divine, started 33 years ago, and thereafter the Divine took him up and since then Ramdas has been feeling he is a child of God and he is made to do everything by His will. In that state of self-surrender Ramdas feels happy in all situations and conditions, because he knows they are brought about by the Divine Master and Mother—God—who is all compassion, all mercy, and all kindness. He is verily an ocean of joy and love. We have such a great Master and Mother for our refuge. Where is the cause then for our anxiety? The whole universe is for you the Divine and nothing but the Divine. Your heart is always flowing out with love equally to the whole creation, because the whole creation is the form of your Eternal Beloved. This is the realisation we should aim at.

TAKE REFUGE IN THE NAME

There are so many desires worrying us day and night. In this condition there is only one refuge and that is God, and the easiest path to approach Him is the path of devotion. Devotion or Bhakti is intense longing for God above everything else. In that spirit we should remember Him and take His holy name. His name is the boat that takes us across the sea of life. This has been declared to us by all great sages and saints. We can keep the Name on our tongue and our heart in tune with God all the time. This practice of taking God's name continuously will enable us to remember Him without any break and we shall gradually develop the consciousness of His presence within us. We should not run after worldly ambitions and transitory pleasures. These things do not contribute to our real happiness. We must free ourselves from these and pray to God to give us strength to remember Him constantly. When our mind is completely absorbed in Him, no desires will harass us.

Desires are like so many scorpions stinging the mind. They sting us constantly and we become most miserable. All great saints like Tukaram, Ekanath, Jnandev, Namdev, Kabir and many

others have told us with one voice that God's name is the most simple way to remember God. By taking God's name, we shall be drinking nectar, because the Name is nectar. Name itself is God and God is Bliss. Therefore the Name is also Bliss. So it follows that when we take the Name we enjoy Bliss.

Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantihi !

